

*The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th centuries)  
and Its International Legacy*

# LEAVES FROM THE *BODHI* TREE











# LEAVES FROM THE *BODHI* TREE:

The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th centuries)  
and Its International Legacy

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington

1990

Published by The Dayton Art Institute  
in Association with the University of Washington Press,  
Seattle and London





Cover

Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra

Cat. no. 29.

This project was made possible by grants from the Kettering Fund; the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; The India Foundation of Dayton; Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities; David R. Nalin; and the Merck Company Foundation. Additional research assistance was provided by The Ohio State University Office of Research and Graduate Studies and The Ohio State University College of the Arts.

Exhibition Schedule:

**The Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio**

November 11, 1989-January 14, 1990

**The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland**

February 17, 1990-April 15, 1990

**The Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey**

May 22, 1990-August 26, 1990

**The David and Alfred Smart Gallery, University of Chicago**

October 9, 1990-December 2, 1990



Editor : Miranda Shaw  
Design : Graphic Design Continuum  
Production : Orientations Magazine Limited, Hong Kong  
Printing : Techpearl Printing Limited, Hong Kong

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 89-083371

The Dayton Art Institute ISBN 0-937809-09-8

University of Washington Press ISBN 0-295-970642-2

Copyright 1989 by  
The Dayton Art Institute  
P.O. Box 941  
Dayton, Ohio 45401-0941 U.S.A.

Protected by copyright under terms of International  
Copyright Union. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in  
a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any  
means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording,  
or otherwise, without prior permission, in writing, of  
The Dayton Art Institute.



To Evelyn and Jerome Lubin



# CONTENTS

Foreword (Clarence W. Kelley)	11
Prefatory Note (Stella Kramrisch)	13
Authors' Acknowledgments and Credits	15
Lenders to the Exhibition	17
Note on Transliteration and Pronunciation	19
Color Plates	20
Introduction (Susan L. Huntington)	69
Part I: The Pāla Period (Susan L. Huntington)	73
Introduction to the Pāla Period	75
Catalogue of Pāla Period Objects	123
Part II: The Pāla Legacy Abroad: The Transmission to Southeast Asia and Southern China (Susan L. Huntington)	195
Introduction to Southeast Asia and Southern China	197
Catalogue of Southeast Asian and Southern Chinese Objects	217
Part III: The Pāla Legacy Abroad: The Transmission to Nepal, Tibet, and China (John C. Huntington)	249
Introduction to Nepal	253
Catalogue of Nepali Objects	261
Introduction to Tibet and China	281
Catalogue of Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan Objects	309
Introduction to Tibetan Stone Sculpture	359
Introduction to the Pāla-dependent Schools of Metal Sculpture in Tibet and China	366
Black and White Plates	397
Epilogue (Susan L. Huntington)	529
Appendix I: The Eight Great Illusory Displays ( <i>Aṣṭamahāprātihārya</i> ) According to a Chinese Text (John C. Huntington)	531
Appendix II: The Iconography of Cakrasaṃvara and the Deities of His <i>Maṇḍala</i> (John C. Huntington)	535
Appendix III: Chronological Charts and Tables (John C. Huntington)	541
Select Bibliography	575
Glossary	587
Guide to Subjects and Themes	601
Maps and Chart of Tibetan Painting Styles	605

## FOREWORD

**T**his exhibition originally began as a modest research project on a twelfth-century stone stele from Bengal in the collection of the Dayton Art Institute. In the course of our studies, we became intrigued that despite the great wealth of materials on India, little exhaustive research had actually been conducted on the art of its Pāla period (eighth-twelfth centuries) to which the DAI's stele is related. Even more intriguing was the aspect that in recent publications on South Asia, many scholars have indicated that the Himalayan and Southeast Asian cultures owe a great indebtedness to that of Pāla India. They offered, however, little information about what that indebtedness actually was. From these two questions, the idea emerged to organize a show of what was slowly being understood as one of India's most magnificent and most influential periods—a period rich in history, culture, and artistic productivity.

To date, only two small exhibitions on the art of the Pāla dynasty have been organized in the United States. During the recent Festival of India celebrations, moreover, while a great many exhibitions were offered, none covered the Pāla period. In dealing, however, with areas of Indian interests well-known to both the general public and to the scholarly communities, the Festival of India projects, as well as the two small aforementioned Pāla shows, acted as a springboard from which we have delved into a deeper and more critical examination of the Pāla period.

A project of this nature is the work of the combined efforts of a great many people. Our greatest thanks and praise, however, are reserved for our guest curators Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, both of the Department of History of Art at The Ohio State University. While this exhibition draws primarily upon works from U.S. collections and is thus limited in this aspect, the Huntingtons have for the past eighteen years travelled extensively in the Pāla regions and throughout the surrounding areas where the Pāla style was exported. In the course of their field research over the years, they have amassed a vast photographic archive of Pāla and Pāla-dependent materials upon which this work is based. Their efforts in this neglected area of Indian studies as well as Pāla-dependent traditions in the rest of Asia are the contributing factors that have brought this long

overshadowed period and its legacy to the attention of others. This project and the quality of its contributions to the study of Indian and South Asian art could never have been realized without their assistance, enthusiasm, and scholarship. We are fortunate to have been so closely associated with Susan and John, and wish to express our sincerest appreciation for their collaboration.

No exhibition can exist without the works of art, made available through the kind and generous support of its lenders. This project gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our museum colleagues and private collectors who unstintingly agreed to allow us to exhibit their treasures. To all of them, we are deeply appreciative. We likewise welcome the opportunity to share their collections and their interest in furthering an understanding of the art and culture of South Asia. Several of the objects, however, were too fragile to travel for the entire tour of the show, and thus were not exhibited at all the venues. We regret this, but are deeply thankful to the lenders who nonetheless permitted us to include them for part of this project.

We are delighted also to have been able to share this exhibition with others through the cooperative participation of other venue sites. Our thanks are extended to Dr. Robert Bergman, Director, and Dr. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., Curator of Asian Art at the Walters Art Gallery; Mr. Samuel C. Miller, Director, and Ms. Valrae Reynolds, Curator of Oriental Collections at The Newark Museum; and Jeffrey Abt, Acting Director, and Richard A. Born, Curator at The David and Alfred Smart Gallery at the University of Chicago.

Here at the DAI, the complex details of tracking all the objects made available for this show have been managed by our registrar, Dominique Vasseur, and his assistant, Jean Mazzarella. Their diligence and graceful patience throughout this entire project are most warmly appreciated. We are also indebted to both Ruth Spencer, former secretary to the Curatorial Department, and her successor, Marsha Iddings, for their invaluable assistance, thoroughness and calm dispositions. Research into this project was greatly facilitated by the support of Helen Pinkney, Librarian Emeritus, Jane Dunwoodie, Librarian, and Suzanne Gourlie, Assistant Librarian. They willingly agreed to expand our holdings of Indian and South Asian



publications, and gladly tracked down reference queries. Our work would have been impossible without the encouragement and moral support of the curatorial and general staff at the DAI. Special mention should, of course, go to our director Bruce Evans whose confidence in our efforts to further a humanistic understanding between different cultures fosters projects such as this.

Initial funding from the National Endowment for the Arts allowed us to incorporate the topic of Pāla art and Pāla influences into this project. The Federal Council on the Art and the Humanities provided indemnification of the overseas loans. Additional support made possible through the kind efforts of Harish Trivedi, Chairman, was received from the India Foundation of Dayton and from

our Indian community. Further funding was received from David R. Nalin and The Merck Company Foundation.

We are also greatly indebted to Mrs. Virginia W. Kettering and the Kettering Fund, not only for the support of this project, but for the continued support of the Dayton Art Institute as well.

Finally then to everyone involved in small and great ways, and to our special and personal friends who made this project a reality, a sincere thank you.

Clarence W. Kelley  
Curator of Asian Art  
The Dayton Art Institute

## PREFATORY NOTE

The text of the catalogue *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th centuries) and Its International Legacy* brings together the immense knowledge of the Pāla-Sena school gained in the last seventy years. The work of the Pāla-Sena school had its far-reaching impact on art outside of India, more enduring than in India itself. The persistence of its basic formal elements in the arts of Asia may be compared to the hold classical antiquity in the West had on the art of Europe.

The text of this catalogue by Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington allows no leaf of the *bodhi* tree to remain untouched, examines no branch without accounting for its support, and traces no root without testing its depth.

Stella Kramrisch  
December, 1989

## AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CREDITS

We are pleased to add our thanks to those expressed so graciously by Clarence W. Kelley in his Foreword, acknowledging the many individuals and institutions whose cooperation and assistance have greatly facilitated our work on the exhibition and catalogue. In particular, the many lenders to the exhibition must be warmly thanked for their supreme cooperation. Without their generous help, a project like this could never have been completed.

Our deepest thanks also are due to Mr. Clarence Kelley, Curator of Asian Art at the Dayton Art Institute, for all he has done to make this project a success. The initial concept for the exhibition was Clarence's; it was he who conceived the idea of an exhibition that would not only highlight the rich artistic traditions of Pāla period India, but would also demonstrate their legacy in the art of other regions of Asia. It was, as they say, an idea whose time had come and we are delighted to have had the opportunity to participate in this project and help bring it to fruition. Throughout our work on this project, Clarence has been a model of efficiency, cooperation, and diplomacy and we would like to thank him for all he has done to facilitate the work. Our thanks are also extended to the other members of Dayton Art Institute staff, particularly Bruce Evans, Director, for all they did to assist in matters pertaining to the exhibition and catalogue.

At The Ohio State University a number of individuals also greatly facilitated our work, particularly regarding the catalogue. Dr. Thomas L. Sweeney, Acting Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies and Dr. Robert L. Arnold, Associate Dean of the College of the Arts, were generous and prompt in responding to our request for funds to assist in the final stages of manuscript preparation, and we are greatly in their debt. Susan Moseley spent many hours helping in the preparation of the manuscript, and we greatly appreciate her prompt and unwavering reliability and the superb quality of her work. Dana Ugolini also assisted in the preparation of portions of the manuscript, and we thank her as well for the outstanding job she did. Dr. William Jeffrey McKibben must be thanked for assuming some of our other responsibilities during the period of manuscript completion, thus freeing us for work on the catalogue.

To Miranda Shaw, our pen-wielding, *karuṇā*-and

*prajñā*-embodying Bodhisattva editor, our gratitude is boundless. It has been our greatest delight to have had her as a participant in this project. In addition to her vast editing skills, from which the manuscript has benefitted immensely, she generously shared with us her deep knowledge of Asian religious traditions, particularly Buddhism. Her enviable language skills, particularly of the Tibetan language, have helped render the text more accurate and consistent. Most of all, Miranda's unwavering dedication and enthusiasm for the project were of immeasurable value to us, and the catalogue has benefitted greatly from her special gifts and talents.

Dr. Forrest McGill, Assistant Director at The Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C. kindly read the Pāla and Southeast Asia sections of the manuscript and generously shared his knowledge with us. We are extremely grateful to him for taking time from his busy schedule to read the text, and for the many valuable suggestions he made.

At every stage of the project, we were warmed by the enthusiasm and support of many individuals. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the help provided by the following individuals: Ms. Terese Tse Bartholomew, Dr. Stanislaw Czuma, Dr. Joseph M. Dye III, Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford, Mr. Steven M. Kossack, Mr. Martin Lerner, Dr. Mary Linda, Mr. Robert D. Mowry, Dr. David Nalin, Dr. Andrew Pekarik, Mr. Jaap Polak, Ms. Amy G. Poster, Mr. Willim Jay Rathbun, Ms. Valrae Reynolds, Mr. Peter Richardus, Ms. Pauline Scheurleer, and Dr. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr.

Sanskrit inscriptions on objects in the exhibition were kindly read by Dr. B. N. Mukherjee, Carmichael Professor at the University of Calcutta, and by Dr. S. P. Tewari, Superintending Epigraphist, Archaeological Survey of India, Mysore. Each has been acknowledged at the appropriate places in the text. However, we would like to express our deepest thanks here as well to both of these scholars, who so generously shared their time and expertise with us.

With a few exceptions, the translations of Tibetan inscriptions are by John C. Huntington. Specific credits are cited in the text, but we would like to express our warmest thanks here as well to those individuals who provided translations of Tibetan materials: Dr. Jeffrey

Hopkins; Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnāth, India; Dr. Jose Cabezon; Ngawang Jorden, of Sakya College; and Ms. Miranda Shaw. All translations of Chinese materials are by John C. Huntington, although a preliminary translation of the *sūtra* appearing in Appendix I was provided by Fang-I Su.

We would also like to thank our son Eric for his help in printing out draft materials and for his inordinate patience during every stage of the project. We hope that he enjoyed his many visits to museums and collections as much as we enjoyed his company during our travels.

All drawings, graphics, maps, and charts were prepared by John C. Huntington.

Photographs of objects in the show were supplied by the respective museums and collectors with the following exceptions: John C. Huntington (58, 60 [color], 89 [color], 91, 115); the Walters Art Gallery (112 [black and white]); and Otto Nelson for photographs of materials in the following collections: The Asia Society, New York; Dr. Wesley and Mrs. Carolyn Halpert, and The Zimmerman Family Collection.

Photographic credits for the text figures are as follows:

The Asia Society, New York, 8

The Cleveland Museum of Art, 10-12, 76

Fig. 21 photo after N. J. Krom, *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst*, 3 vols. ('S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1923), vol. 3, pl. 109.

John C. Huntington, 3-7, 13, 16-18, 24, 26-28, 30, 32, 33, 42, 44, 45, 48, 53, 70, 71-75, 77-80

The authorship of individual sections of the catalogue is noted in the Contents with the exception of the four Pāla manuscripts (cat. nos. 57-60) and the image from Yunnan (cat. no. 88), which were jointly authored, as indicated by the initials following the entries.

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington

## LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Alsdorf Foundation, Chicago  
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Alsdorf, Chicago  
Anonymous Loans  
The Art Institute of Chicago  
The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D.  
Rockefeller 3rd Collection  
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery  
Brundage Collection  
The Brooklyn Museum  
The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh  
Cincinnati Art Museum  
Mr. and Mrs. Willard G. Clark  
The Cleveland Museum of Art  
The Dayton Art Institute  
Denver Art Museum  
Samuel Eilenberg  
Mr. and Mrs. Elliott H. Eisman  
Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago  
The First National Bank of Chicago  
Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford  
Garrigues Collection, San Francisco  
Gest Oriental Library, Princeton University  
Emily M. Goldman  
Dr. Wesley and Mrs. Carolyn M. Halpert  
Mr. and Mrs. George E. Hibbard  
Honolulu Academy of Arts  
Stephen P. Huyler  
The Kronos Collection  
Navin Kumar Gallery, New York  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
Dr. Ralph C. Marcove  
Douglas McDougall, New York  
Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
Ms. Carol F. Music  
Dr. David Nalin  
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City,  
Missouri  
The Newark Museum  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
J. Polak, Amsterdam

Pritzker Collection  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, The  
Netherlands  
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada  
Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Seattle Art Museum  
Society of Friends of Asiatic Art, Amsterdam,  
The Netherlands  
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts  
Doris Wiener Gallery  
Nancy Wiener  
The Zimmerman Family Collection



# NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

In general, Sanskrit words have been italicized and diacritics have been provided even when words have become part of English usage and appear in English language dictionaries. (For example, we have used *maṇḍala* in preference to *mandala*, and *stūpa* in preference to *stupa*.)

Sanskrit vowels are pronounced in the following manner:

- a* pronounced as *u* in *hut*
- ā* pronounced as *a* in *father*
- i* pronounced as *i* in *hit*
- ī* pronounced as *i* in *ravine*
- u* pronounced as *u* in *put*
- ū* pronounced as *u* in *mule*
- ṛ* pronounced as *ri* in *river*
- e* pronounced as *ay* in *day*
- ai* pronounced as *ai* in *aisle*
- o* pronounced as *o* in *go*
- au* pronounced as *ow* in *how*
- m̐* lengthens and nasalizes the preceding vowel
- ḥ* an exhalation of breath that occurs only at the end of a syllable or word

*Th* and *ph* are aspirated consonants. They should be pronounced as in *goatherd* and *shepherd*, not as in *think*

and *phenomenon*, respectively. This aspiration also applies to *kh*, *gh*, *ch*, *jh*, *dh*, and *bh*.

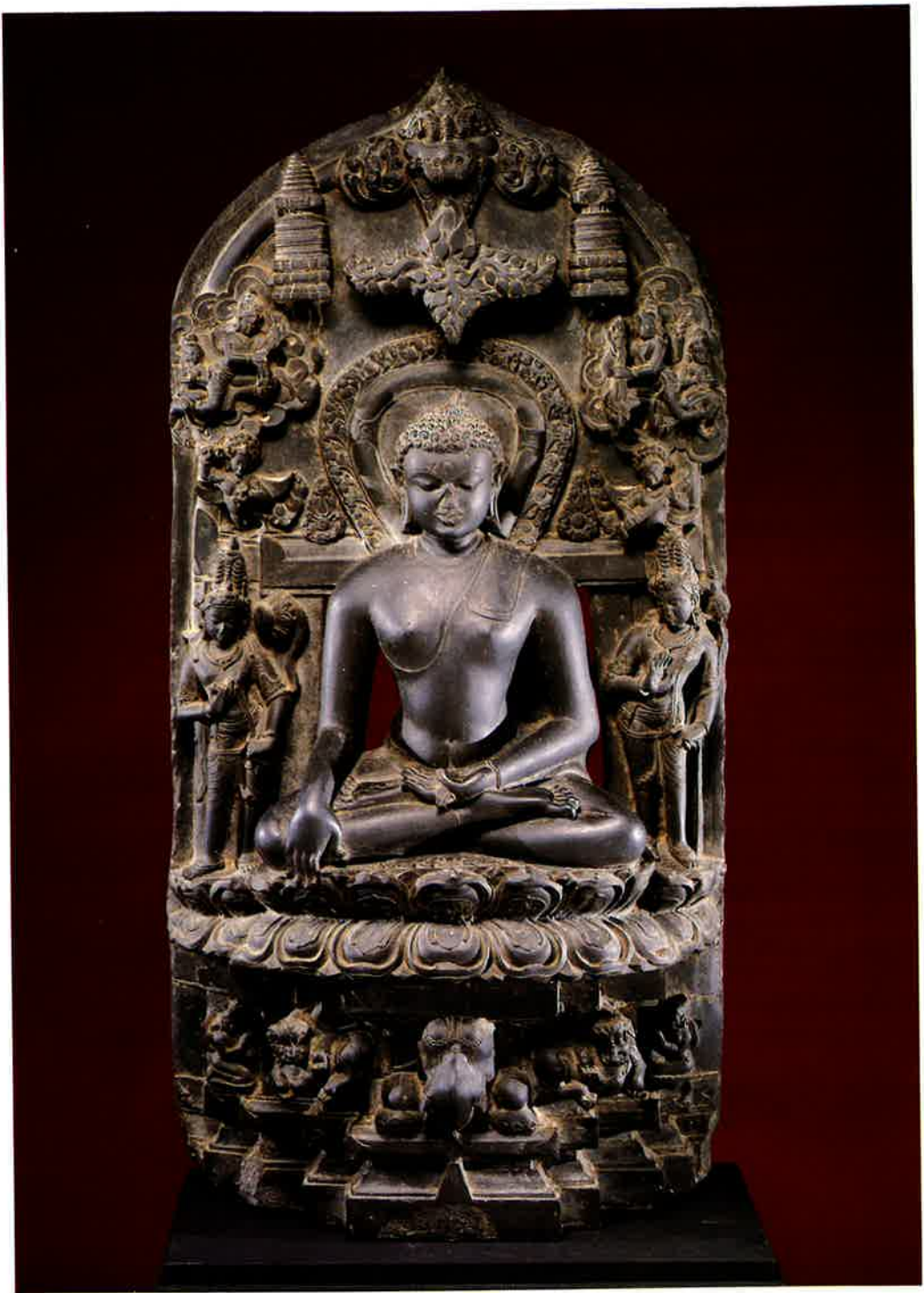
The following pronunciations also should be noted:

- ś* pronounced as *sh* in *shoe*
- ṣ* pronounced as *sh* in *shoe*
- c* pronounced as *ch* in *church*
- ṇ* pronounced as *n* in *song*
- ñ* pronounced as *ñ* in the Spanish *señor*

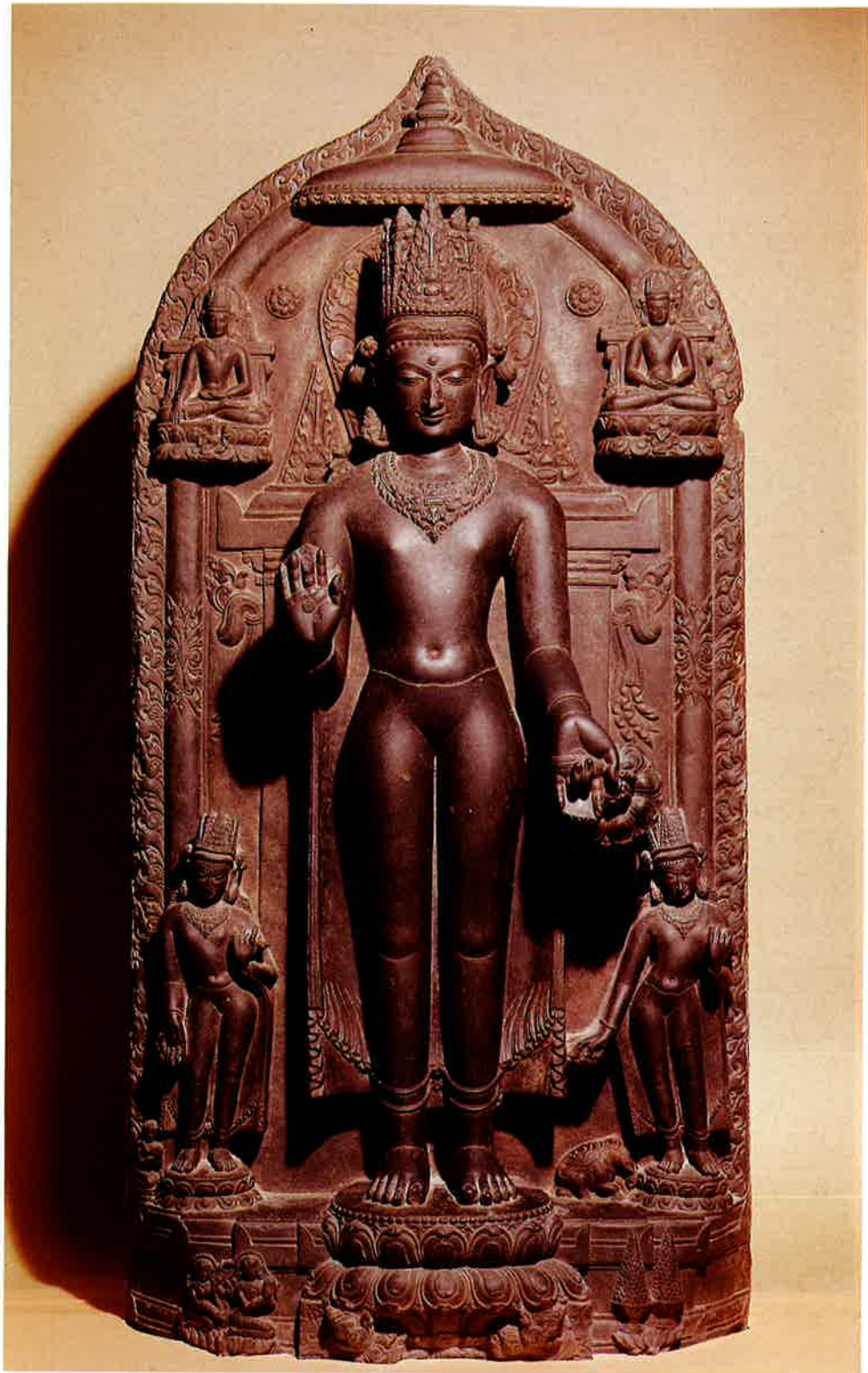
Sanskrit names have been used for the names of deities in the Southeast Asian section of the catalogue in preference to local Myanmari (Burmese), Thai, and Indonesian names. Every attempt has been made to standardize spellings of Myanmari, Thai, and Indonesian words, although inconsistencies may have crept in. We are grateful to Dr. Forrest McGill for his assistance regarding preferred transliterations of Thai words.

Tibetan words have been transliterated according to the Wylie system. Hyphens have been omitted and internal capitalization of Tibetan words has not been used. Pronunciations for Tibetan words are given phonetically.

Pinyin transliterations for Chinese words are used in the text, followed by the Wade-Giles transliteration the first time the word is used (and subsequently in cases where repetition seemed relevant).



29.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Possibly Bangladesh, northern Bengal. Ca. eleventh  
century.



30.  
Crowned Śākyamuni Buddha with Four Buddha Life  
Scenes. Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha. Ca.  
late eleventh century.



35.  
The Sage Agastya. Probably India, eastern Bihar or  
southern West Bengal. Ca. twelfth century.





44.  
Mañjuśrī Kumāra. Probably India, Bihar, Nalandā. Ca.  
early to mid-ninth century.





46.  
Viṣṇu with Consorts. Probably southeastern  
Bangladesh. Ca. late ninth or early tenth century.



49.  
Maitreya Bodhisattva. Probably India, Bihar. Ca.  
twelfth century.





57.  
Details, Buddhist Manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*  
*Prajñāpāramitā* Text. Probably India, Bihar. Ca. 1105.



58a.

Leaves from a Buddhist Manuscript of the  
*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* Text. Part A: India,  
 Bihar, Nālandā, ca. 1073; Part B: probably India, Bihar  
 (?), ca. mid-twelfth century.





58c.

Details, Buddhist Manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* Text.  
Part B: probably India, Bihar (?), ca. mid-twelfth century.





59.

Details, Buddhist Manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*  
*Prajñāpāramitā* Text. Eastern India or Bangladesh.  
 Ca. twelfth century.





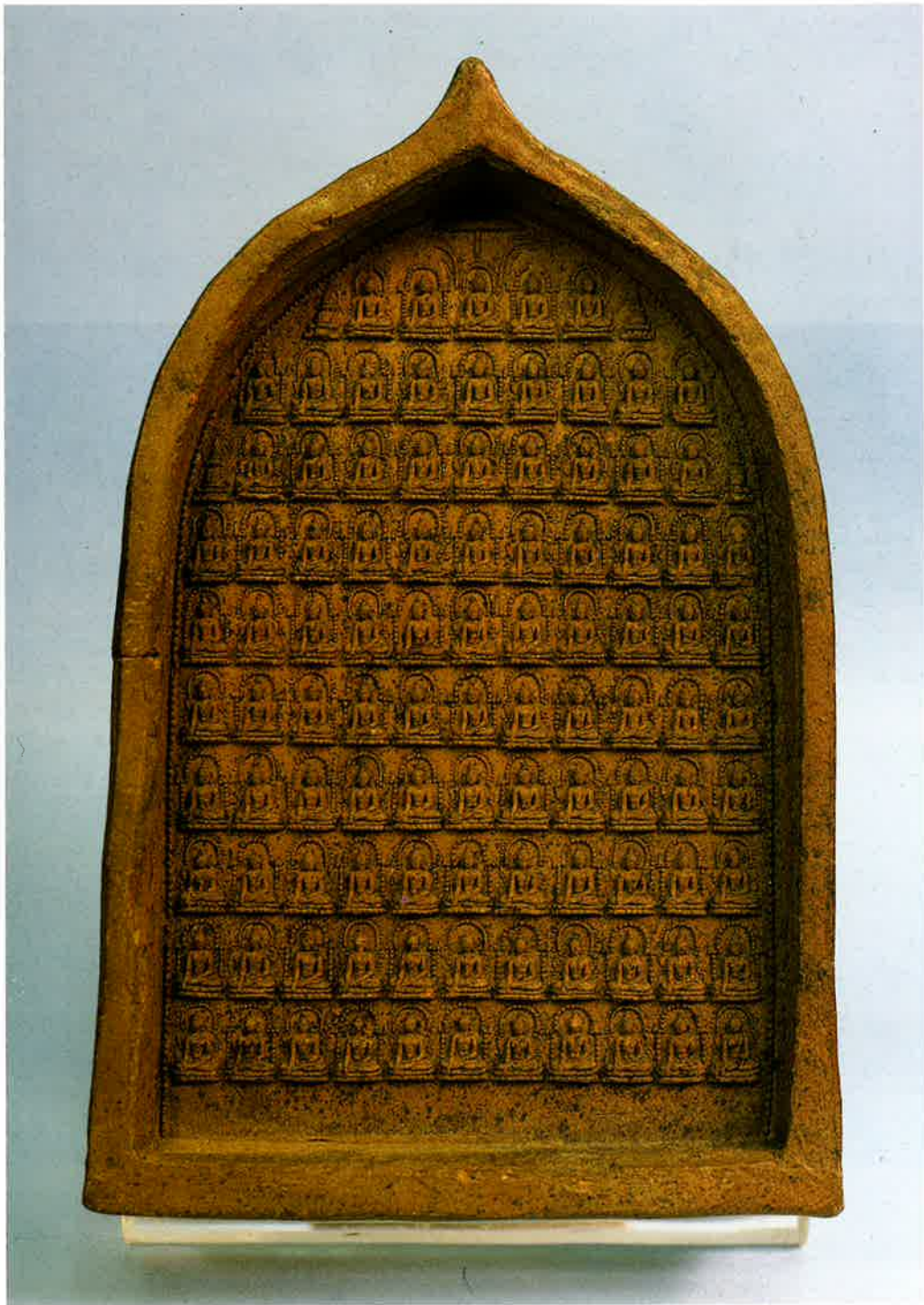
60.

Details, Buddhist Manuscript. Top, left to right:  
Vairocana, Amitāyus, Ratnasambhava; bottom, left to  
right: Vajravārāhī, unidentified Dharmapāla, Hevajra.  
Eastern India or Bangladesh. Ca. twelfth century.





62.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra and  
Other Scenes. Myanmar (Burma), probably Pagan. Ca.  
thirteenth century.



68.  
*Sāccha* with One Hundred Buddhas. Myanmar  
(Burma). Ca. twelfth century.





89.  
Leaves from a Manuscript of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* Text.  
Nepal, Kathmandu Valley. Ca. eleventh century.



90.  
Book Cover Depicting Umā-Maheśvara and  
Companions. Nepal. Ca. twelfth century.

91.  
Folio with an Image of Mahāśītavatī or Mahāmāyūrī  
from a Manuscript of a Pañcarakṣā Text. Nepal. Ca.  
thirteenth century.





92.  
Cakrasaṃvara with Vajravārāhī and the Deities of their  
*Maṇḍala*. Nepal, probably Kathmandu Valley. Ca. late  
fourteenth or fifteenth century.



94.  
Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa and Dveṣavajrī. Nepal. Ca.  
sixteenth or seventeenth century.





104.  
Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī. Nepal, Kathmandu Valley. Ca. 1435.



105.  
Vajrasattva and Vajradhātviśvarī. Tibet. Ca. 1065-1085.



106.  
Vajradhātu Vairocana. Tibet. Ca. 1065-1085.





107.  
Vajrāsana Visualization with Life Scenes of Śākyamuni  
Buddha. Tibet. Late eleventh or early twelfth century.



108.  
Śyāma Tārā. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century (or earlier).



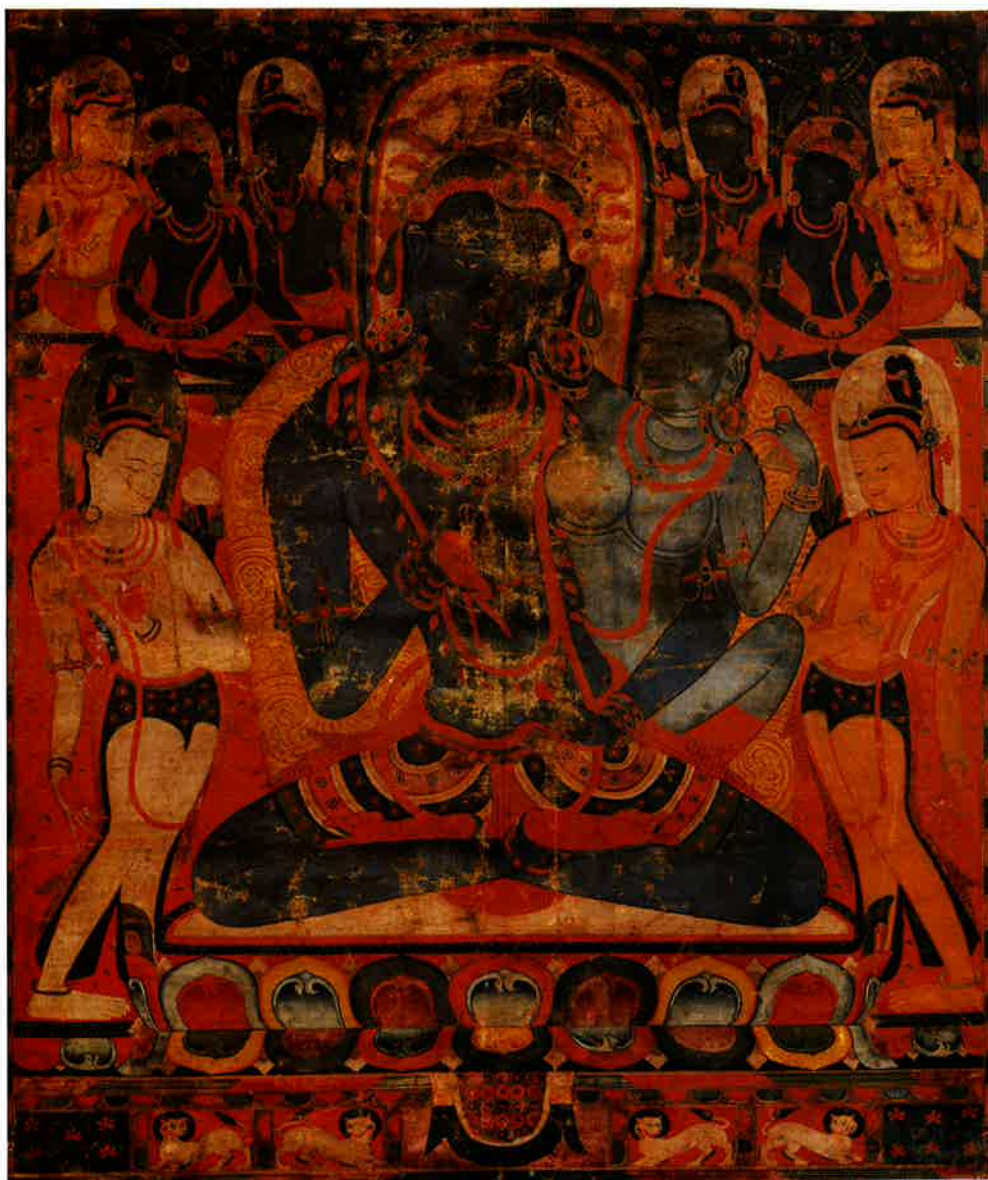


109.  
Vairocana. India, Ladakh. Ca. twelfth century.





110.  
Śaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century.



111.  
Vajrasattva and Vajradhātviśvarī. Tibet, gTsang  
District, possibly from Zhwa lu monastery. Mid-  
thirteenth century.





112.  
Detail, Title Leaf from a Manuscript of the *Dohakośagīti*  
Showing the Mahāsiddha Śavaripa. Tibet. Ca.  
thirteenth century.



113.  
Śyāma Tārā. Tibet. Ca. mid-twelfth to early thirteenth  
century.





115.  
Vajradhara. Tibet or China (?). After mid-fifteenth  
century or later.





116.  
Vajrasattva and Vajradhātviśvarī. Tibet. Fourteenth  
century.





117.  
Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī. Tibet. Late fifteenth or  
early sixteenth century.



118.  
Pañcakula Hevajraṇḍāka. Tibet. Ca. 1480 to 1520.





119a.  
Painting from a Temple Consecration Set. Maitreya  
with two Arhats. Tibet. Ca. late fourteenth or early  
fifteenth century.



119b.  
 Paintings from a Temple Consecration Set. Top to  
 bottom: White Mañjuśrī, Red Jambhala, Blue Jambhala.  
 Tibet. Ca. late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.



119c.  
 Paintings from a Temple Consecration Set. Top to  
 bottom: Vaiśravaṇa, Virūpākṣa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Tibet.  
 Ca. late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.





120.

Pañjara Mahākāla. Tibet (by a Nepali artist for Tibetan patrons).  
Sixteenth century.

(Color transparency unavailable at the time of publication.)



121.  
Kharamukha Cakrasamvara *Maṇḍala*. Tibet. Ca.  
sixteenth century.





122.  
Unidentified Teacher. Tibet. Ca. mid-to-late fifteenth or  
early sixteenth century.





123.  
Mahārakta Gaṇeśa. Tibet. Late sixteenth or early  
seventeenth century.



124.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra  
Attended by Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya. Sino-  
Tibetan, possibly Kham District. Ca. fifteenth or  
sixteenth century.





125.  
Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī. China. Ca. 1333 or  
1360-1364.



129.  
Mahāśrī Tārā. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century.





135.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Tibet. Ca. second half of eleventh or early twelfth  
century.



155.  
Śyāma Tārā. Tibet. Ca. fourteenth century.





156.  
Śaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara. Tibeto-Chinese. Ca. late  
thirteenth or fourteenth century.



157.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Tibeto-Chinese. Ca. thirteenth or fourteenth century.





159.  
Unidentified Attendant Bodhisattva. China. Ca.  
fifteenth century.

mostly Buddhist monks seeking refuge in other Buddhist countries of Asia—led to a final burst of Pāla cultural influence abroad.

This exhibition explores the range of Pāla period art and traces its influences in Southeast Asia, primarily Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Indonesia; in the Himalayan region, mainly Nepal and Tibet; and in China. Although they share the Pāla legacy, the artistic traditions of these regions are distinctive, reflecting a fusion of indigenous elements with forms imported from India. The differences among these kindred traditions clearly document the many paths by which Indic culture spread abroad, as well as the cultural, religious, and political predilections of the various peoples of Asia and their diverse reasons for adopting Indic culture as a model.

By exploring what may be called the Pāla international style, the exhibition raises questions about cultural diffusion and influence in the transmission of artistic modes. "Pāla influence" was experienced in highly specific and deliberate ways; therefore, the story of the dissemination of Pāla culture differs for each region and must not be perceived in monolithic terms. "Influence" is all too often seen as a contagion or virus-like phenomenon that can hardly be rejected by a potential recipient. However, if a metaphor must be drawn to portray the nature of cultural influence, perhaps it should be likened to a signal that is emitted but not always heard, and if heard not always heeded. Although some unsolicited or unconscious influence undoubtedly occurred through trade and missionary contacts, on the whole those who looked to India for inspiration during the Pāla period were not passive recipients of India's cultural charisma. Rather, they were aggressive seekers who deliberately chose and shaped concepts, products, and technologies to serve their own purposes. Thus, it is important to understand precisely why a Tibetan king would send to India for the illustrious Indian *paṇḍita* Atiśa, or why a king of what is now Indonesia would make a major donation to the renowned Nālandā monastery, or why a king of Myanmar (Burma) would refurbish the great Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā, for their reasons differed widely. Coupled with these deliberate efforts to partake of Pāla culture, the cultural and religious heritages of these foreign lands undoubtedly played a major role in determining the reasons for contact with India and how the Indian influences were assimilated and ultimately transformed.

A simple glance at the varying artistic traditions included in this catalogue verifies that not all inspiration from the Pāla idiom was manifested in the same way. In some cases, Pāla models were copied so closely that art historians disagree vehemently about whether a given piece is in fact a Pāla creation or a work inspired by the Pāla style but produced elsewhere. In other cases, artistic traditions absorbed a distinctive imprint from Pāla art, but

produced highly original creations, using the Pāla model only as a point of departure. It should be noted that closely copied works are by no means inferior, as might be inferred from a Western perspective in which originality is considered a measure of artistic worth. Rather, these works of art reflect an approach to creativity that values expression within the parameters established by tradition. Buddhists in particular throughout Asia looked to the Indian exemplars as the authentic sources to be emulated. To them, the objects that today we call works of art were not merely decorative items but were vital components of their religious quest, and to Buddhists outside of India, India was the source of authentic Buddhist images and authoritative Buddhist texts. The Pāla kingdom represented not just Indian Buddhism, but the religion at its most genuine, for the Pāla territories contained the original nucleus of the Buddhist religion, Magadha, the homeland of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. Therefore, Pāla period works of art were in many cases emulated primarily because they were religiously authoritative rather than simply aesthetically compelling.

In some areas of Asia, the Pāla influence had a longlasting effect. For example, in Nepal and Tibet traces of the Pāla idiom are visible in art produced during the twentieth century. Other areas experienced late resurgences of the Pāla style, as in the case of the Pāla revival that occurred in China under the patronage of the Qianlong Emperor (1736-1796). In other regions, such as Indonesia, the essence of Pāla period art was quickly transformed and even abandoned as new cultural directions emerged.

Thus far, it has been difficult to determine whether any important influences from other regions of Asia stimulated changes in Pāla period art or culture, although in light of the significant international activity of the period it must be assumed that some influence occurred. But whether or not one can trace the footsteps of internationalism in Pāla period art itself, it is clear that without the brisk international activity of the period, Pāla culture, particularly Buddhism and its art, might not have prospered as it did. For the Pāla kingdom, by virtue of its thriving Buddhism, was an anomaly in the otherwise almost totally Hindu world of India of the time. Scholars traditionally have explained the Buddhist florescence in the Pāla lands as a result of the devout Buddhism of the Pāla kings and their patronage of the religion and its art; however, recent research has demonstrated that only a few of the Pāla kings were exclusively Buddhist and that royal patronage constituted only one of many sources of support for the religious institutions of the day. Instead, it may be posited that the survival of this island of Buddhism in India's Hindu world was in great measure due to the international activity of the period, which not only fostered the religious institutions but must have contributed greatly



to the economy of the region. When we speak of Pāla internationalism, then, we are referring to a vigorously dynamic process, for at the same time that Pāla culture was disseminated, it also was nourished and perpetuated by its emulators.

In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, when Pāla period culture was annihilated in India largely as a result of Muslim incursions into the region, it was because the seeds of Pāla culture had been sown abroad and had taken root elsewhere in Asia that Indian exiles found welcoming hosts. Scattered throughout Asia during the Pāla period like leaves from the *bodhi* tree, and further nurtured when Indian Buddhists fled their homeland to seek refuge in those foreign lands, the Pāla traditions continued, though not on Indian soil. This exhibition tells the story not only of Pāla period culture as it prospered in its own time, but of its legacy after its demise in the land of its birth.

#### SLH

- <sup>1</sup> Burma officially changed the spelling of its name in English to Myanmar in June, 1989. In addition, the spelling of the name of the capital city was changed from Rangoon to Yangon.



PART I  
THE PĀLA PERIOD

Susan L. Huntington



# INTRODUCTION TO THE PĀLA PERIOD

**F**rom the earliest traceable times, the South Asian subcontinent—equivalent to the modern nations of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—has been a loosely knit cultural conglomerate. Populated by diverse peoples speaking a myriad of languages and practicing a number of different religions and their variations, the region, with its extremes of climate and topography and range of natural resources, has hosted numerous distinct subcultures. For example, the customs and traditions of the people of Kashmir in the north are as different from those of the people of the deep south as the culture of Scandinavia is from that of the Mediterranean region of Europe. Yet these diverse peoples were also unified by broadly shared cultural traits and ideologies and were linked by common technologies in fields such as metallurgy, ceramics, and architecture. Continual interaction among the different peoples of the subcontinent created an overarching commonality that enables us to refer to an “ancient Indian culture.”<sup>1</sup>

Throughout most of its history, various portions of South Asia were ruled simultaneously by kings of different royal lineages. Their territories ranged from tiny fiefdoms controlled by more powerful overlords to vast empires encompassing great portions of the subcontinent. Sometimes political units coincided with cultural, linguistic, and other natural divisions, but more typically political and cultural boundaries did not correspond, for kings often sought to extend their territorial holdings into neighboring regions and political boundaries constantly changed with their fluctuating fortunes, while the general populations typically remained stable. Because of these factors, it is difficult to trace ancient India’s history by using either a strictly political or cultural framework.

Nonetheless, the period from approximately A.D. 750 to 1200 in the eastern Gangetic region of the South Asian subcontinent has come to be known as the Pāla period, named after the family of kings that ruled large parts of the region for much of that time. In discussing the so-called Pāla period, however, caution must be taken not to assume a cultural unity in the territories this family controlled or a static political boundary during the four and one-half centuries of their paramouncy. For, like other Indian kings, the Pālas ruled a heterogeneous cultural region, although one that ultimately developed certain unified

characteristics at least partly as a result of their overlordship. Furthermore, while the Pālas were the dominant ruling family of the period, they were not exclusive lords of the eastern regions, for during their lengthy hegemony their fortunes were not constant, and during periods of weakness other competing dynasties, such as the Candras and the Senas, gained control of some of the eastern lands.

## GEOGRAPHY OF THE PĀLA KINGDOM AND THE EASTERN GANGETIC REGION (ANCIENT PRĀCYA)

Pāla culture flourished in what may most accurately be described as the eastern Gangetic region of the South Asian subcontinent, which is generally called Prācyā in ancient texts (fig. 2 and Map 1 at back). Corresponding to

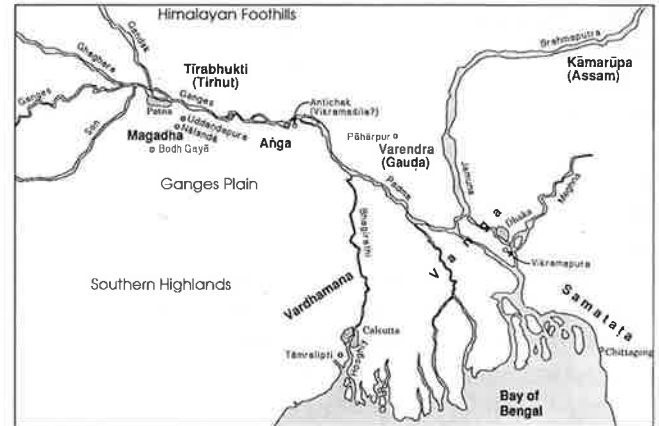


Figure 2. Map of the Pāla region showing ancient divisions.

portions of what are now the states of Bihar and West Bengal in India and the neighboring nation of Bangladesh, the region was diverse both culturally and geographically. However, because of the political unity created by the Pālas, as well as extensive trade and travel linking the distant corners of the territory during Pāla times, considerable cultural unity occurred, as displayed so dramatically by the artistic traditions.

What is now the state of Bihar is physically divided into three regions: the Ganges Plain, the Southern

Highlands, and the Himalayan Foothills. Pāla period culture flourished mainly in the Ganges Plain. The Himalayan Foothills, although not a central part of the cultural sphere, probably served as an important conduit between the Ganges Plain culture and Nepal to the north, while the Southern Highlands played little role at all in Pāla period culture.

The Gangetic plain is divided into northern and southern regions by the most striking feature of Bihar's geography, the Ganges River, the principal riverine artery of South Asia, which traverses Bihar from west to east. Fed by waters from two different watersheds, the Himalayas and the Chotanagpur Plateau in southern Bihar, the whole drainage system of the region gravitates toward this major waterway.

The principal cultural area of the Ganges Plains in ancient times was known as Magadhabhukti,<sup>2</sup> or simply Magadha, located south of the Ganges River and corresponding to large portions of what today are Patna, Gaya, Nalanda, and Nawada districts.<sup>3</sup> Already a seat of Indic culture for nearly fifteen hundred years when the first Pāla ruler assumed the throne, Magadha's importance to the early economic, political, and religious history of South Asia cannot be overestimated. Strategically located along the banks of the Ganges River and richly endowed with mineral wealth, including iron, gold, and copper and other natural resources, Magadha produced India's first great king, Aśoka of the Maurya dynasty (ca. 272-231 B.C.). One of Magadha's most important contributions to the culture of ancient India was Upaniṣadic thought, a totally indigenous philosophical and yogic system that became the doctrinal core of Hinduism and deeply informed South Asia's other two major religious traditions, Buddhism and Jainism. That the Pālas strove to maintain control of Magadha for nearly five centuries is not surprising in light of the cultural and material wealth of the region.

During the Pāla period, Magadha was the principal cultural, religious, economic, and at times political core of Prācyā, particularly during the first half of the Pāla period, that is, through the tenth century. It is believed that the Pālas had a capital or at least a camp at Pāṭaliputra, one of Magadha's thriving urban centers. Containing a network of holy sites associated with the historical Buddha, as well as countless monasteries and Buddhist universities, Magadha attracted devout Buddhists from other kingdoms in ancient India and from throughout Asia during Pāla times. Some of Magadha's most renowned sites were Bodh Gayā, where Śākyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment, and the celebrated Buddhist monastic universities at Nālandā and Uddāṇḍapura. Magadha, the birthplace of Buddhism and the Buddha Śākyamuni, ironically also became the final resting place of the tradition on Indian soil at the close of the Pāla period. Fortunately, however, Buddhism still flourished abroad, partly as a

result of the contribution of Pāla culture to the religious and cultural life of much of the rest of Asia.

The area north of the Ganges River in Bihar was called Tīrabhukti (or Tīrhut) in ancient times and corresponds primarily to portions of Saran, Vaisali, Samastipur, Begusarai, Monghyr (northern), Saharsa, and Purnea districts. Though some Pāla period antiquities have been found in this region, they are scant compared with the abundant Magadhan artistic remains, and it is likely that cultural life of Tīrabhukti was heavily influenced by its more prominent neighbor. Lying on the path between Magadha and the Himalayan Foothills, Tīrabhukti must have served as an important link between Nepal and Magadha, thereby facilitating cultural exchange between India and Nepal.

East of Magadha and also part of the Ganges River culture was the ancient region of Aṅga, which developed its own distinctive subculture during the Pāla period. Largely corresponding to portions of Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts in Bihar, Aṅga's culture was to some extent dependent upon that of its more famous and prominent neighbor, Magadha. The network of holy sites associated with Śākyamuni Buddha did not extend into Aṅga, in spite of some legendary accounts suggesting that he visited the region. However, Aṅga was host to some of the most prominent Buddhist institutions of the Pāla period, most notably the famed Vikramaśīla monastery. The rich and varied artistic traditions of Aṅga, while related to Magadhan styles, indicate that the region hosted significant schools of local craftsmen during and even before the Pāla period.

East of Bihar is the cultural region of Bengal. Today bifurcated between West Bengal state in India and the nation of Bangladesh, Bengal had had a cultural and linguistic identity for more than a millennium when the division occurred in 1947 due to the partition of the South Asian subcontinent.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this catalogue, the region comprising West Bengal in India and the nation of Bangladesh shall be referred to as Bengal to reflect the cultural patterns discernible during the Pāla period.

Ancient Bengal was broken into a number of administrative units that largely reflected the natural divisions created by the patterns of rivers that traverse the land. Although there is disagreement among scholars concerning the precise boundaries of these territories, four major divisions are generally accepted: northern Bengal, called Varendra, or Gauḍa; central Bengal, called Vaṅga; southeastern Bengal, called Samatāṭa; and western Bengal, called Vardhamāna. The northern Bengal region is contiguous with Bihar and roughly corresponds with the modern districts of Malda and West Dinajpur in India, and the western portion of Dhaka (formerly Pabna) District and Rajshahi District (including former Rajshahi, Bogra, Dinajpur, and Rangpur districts) in Bangladesh. It lies

north of the main branch of the Ganges known as the Padma River and west of the Brahmaputra River (called the Jamuna River in Bengal). Central Bengal corresponds to most of the modern districts of Dhaka and Khulna in Bangladesh, and Nadia District in India. It is the alluvial plain roughly enclosed by the Bhagirathi and Hooghly rivers on the west and by the Ganges/Padma River, the lower portion of the Brahmaputra (Jamuna) River, and the mouth of the Meghna River on the north and east. Southeastern Bengal consists of the hilly area east of the Meghna River, corresponding to modern Chittagong District of Bangladesh, encompassing the former Chittagong, Comilla, and Noakhali districts. Finally, western Bengal corresponds with the modern districts of Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Purulia, Hooghly, Howrah, Midnapore, and possibly Murshidabad and 24 Parganas in India. With the exception of 24 Parganas, western Bengal lies primarily to the west of the Bhagirathi and Hooghly rivers and is contiguous with southern Bihar on its west side.

Bengal's most important geographic feature is its extensive river system. As the river delta comprising the mouth of the Ganges River, Bengal is notably flat and mountainless. In ancient times, the network of waterways served as a major means of transportation, and Bengal played a crucial role in the shipment of goods and travellers between its eastern seaports and the interior regions of northern India. Thus, the culture of Bengal was a vital link between the Pāla regions and the countries of Southeast Asia and even China through the intermediary of Southeast Asian ports. Because the paths of the rivers have changed course over the centuries, many of the important cities and ports of ancient times have been swept away, but the names of several have survived in ancient texts. Most renowned among Bengal's coastal ports was Tāmrālipti. Similarly, all traces of once-important religious sites have been erased through changing river courses.

Based on the extensiveness of the artistic remains thus far recovered in Bengal, it may be suggested that its main cultural centers were in the northern and central regions, that is, Varendra and Vaṅga. A simple glance at a map of the eastern Gangetic region reveals a reason for this. Northern Bengal, a roughly v-shaped region between the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, must have been enriched by active trade and the easy accessibility provided by the river system. Central Bengal, where a confluence of some of South Asia's most important rivers occurs, was similarly blessed with the economic, social, and cultural benefits of the river network. Indeed, an examination of the geography of the entire eastern Gangetic region indicates the importance of the rivers in establishing cultural centers. Magadha and Tīrabhukti, flanking the Ganges River in the westernmost portion of Prācyā, and Aṅga, a secondary center further down the Ganges River

to the east, were easily linked not only with each other but with Varendra and Vaṅga and the other centers of Bengal.

Despite their geographic proximity, the histories of the Bihar and Bengal regions are highly distinctive. Bihar, with its cultural center of Magadha, had long been a focus of Indic culture when the Pālas rose to power, while Bengal had only recently been brought into the cultural fold. It was only during the Gupta period, particularly during the reign of King Budhagupta, who ruled in the last quarter of the fifth century, that Bengal became part of the mainstream of Indic culture. In the post-Gupta period, a deliberate program of bringing Bengal into the fold of Brahmanism occurred through the practice of importing *brāhmaṇas* to settle in the region.<sup>5</sup> This colonization of Bengal, primarily by *brāhmaṇas* from central India, undoubtedly paved the way for the growth of Hinduism in the region during the early Pāla period. This growth in turn set the stage for the Hindu florescence of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Following the decline of the Guptas and the cessation of their strong imperial rule, there was a scramble for power in eastern India, out of which emerged two important rulers: Harṣa of Kanauj (reigned 606-647), who claimed the title King of Magadha but whose empire included only portions of Bihar, and Śaśāṅka (ca. 600-636), who is reputed to be the first king of Bengal. Under these kings, the culture of the Prācyā region developed, paving the way for the eventual rise of the Pālas, under whom the eastern region became one of the most important cultural and commercial centers in India. The importance of the region persisted under the Muslim rulers and even the British.

During the early Pāla period, Bihar, particularly Magadha, contained the vast majority of the important centers of artistic production, although some existed in Bengal as well. However, by the late Pāla period, that is, the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Bengali artists were equally actively producing works of art. Accordingly, Buddhist works dominate the early Pāla period through the tenth century, as might be expected from the heavily Buddhist character of the Magadha region, while the later Pāla art of Bengal is primarily Hindu, mainly Vaiṣṇava.

## THE RISE OF THE PĀLAS

The Pālas rose to power in Bengal after a period of political chaos that is usually said to have ensued following the collapse of the empires of Harṣa and Śaśāṅka. Anticipation of the coming chaos must have been felt during the reign of Harṣa, for when Xuanzang (Hsüan-tsang), the famous Chinese Buddhist traveller to Harṣa's kingdom and founder of one of the major schools of Chinese Buddhism, visited Nālandā during the seventh century, the monastery was flourishing, prosperous, and famous. But one night,



Xuanzang had a nightmare in which he saw all of the magnificent courts and chambers of Nālandā deserted. In his premonitory vision, the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī pointed from the pinnacle of one of the great temples at Nālandā to a great conflagration raging around the monastery and, prophesying that a period of confusion and anarchy in India would occur after the death of King Harṣa, advised the Chinese monk to leave the country.<sup>6</sup> Xuanzang's vision—whether actual or embellished in later Chinese texts that took into account the period of chaos following the death of King Harṣa—suggests that all was not well with the Indian Buddhist world of the seventh century. Dwindling numbers of Buddhist adherents and the strengthening of rival faiths in the post-Gupta period seemed to presage the ultimate demise of the Buddhist religion in its homeland.

The period following the deaths of Harṣa and Śaśaṅka indeed is characterized as one of chaos, or, in some sources, as a "reign of fishes" (*mātsyānyāya*, literally, "fish practice") that was brought to an end by the rise of the Pāla dynasty.<sup>7</sup> A story about the ascension of the Pālas out of the "reign of fishes" in which the strong devour the weak is recounted by the Tibetan historian Tāranātha in his *History of Buddhism in India*, completed in A.D. 1608: The kingdom of Bhangala had been without a king for many years and the people were suffering. The leaders, therefore, elected a king, but on his very first night in office, the monarch was killed by a strong and ugly *nāginī* (serpent woman). Each day, a new king was elected, and each night, the woman killed the new king. Years passed as citizens of the kingdom were elected in turn to serve as king. One day, a man who was a devotee of the goddess Cuṇḍā learned that the son of a certain household was to serve as king the next day. Much to the joy of the designated king's family, the man offered to take the place of the son in exchange for a fee. During the night, when the *nāginī* approached the volunteer, he struck her with a wooden club and killed her. For the next six nights, he served as a surrogate for other chosen kings, and on each night he survived the attack of the *nāginī*. After seven days, he was elected as a permanent king and given the name Gopāla.<sup>8</sup>

Although the historicity of Tāranātha's account may be questioned, as a metaphor it suggests the political chaos of the eastern region of the subcontinent prior to the Pāla ascension. A much more reliable historical source, the Khālimpur copperplate grant, issued in the thirty-second year of the reign of Dharmapāla, Gopāla's son and successor, however, also refers to Gopāla's "election" to the throne to "put an end to the practice of fishes."<sup>9</sup> Thus, a historical source very close to the time of the founding of the dynasty suggests that Gopāla's reign ended a period of great political disruption in the eastern Gangetic region, a reputation that endured more than eight centuries to be recorded in Tāranātha's history. Cloaked in both legend

and historical fact, the inception of the Pāla lineage as a ruling family in eastern India was in any case auspicious and heralded a period of political and economic stability and cultural brilliance.

## RECONSTRUCTING THE HISTORY OF THE PERIOD: WRITTEN DOCUMENTS AND ARTISTIC REMAINS

An extensive body of surviving materials enables scholars to reconstruct the history of the Pāla period, including both written sources and material remains. Some, like the Khālimpur copperplate grant and the many surviving artistic and archaeological artifacts, are of the period itself and provide highly reliable historical data. Others, like Tāranātha's history written much later, provide information of a more apocryphal nature. Both types of sources are valuable in helping to reconstruct and understand the period.

Most important among the contemporary written records of the Pāla period are the copperplate grants issued by the kings themselves. Called *tāmraśāsana*,<sup>10</sup> these sole surviving royal records of the Pālas give reliable, albeit invariably favorable, information about the king who issued the grant and his ancestors. Composed in Sanskrit, these epigraphs record official royal gifts, usually of land, to individuals, groups, or institutions. As documents of the royal practice of gift-giving (*dāna*) in Pāla India, they provide information about religious institutions and practices, as well as royal patronage of religious establishments. The practice of inscribing such grants on copperplates marked with a royal seal was well known in ancient India, so the Pālas were not unique in their use of this type of record.<sup>11</sup> In Pāla grants, a standardized format was used, including an invocation to a deity, a eulogy of the donor and his ancestors, the donor's official titles, a description of the grant, a description of the donee, injunctions to officials, and verses that praised those who would comply with the grant and cursed those who would interfere with it.<sup>12</sup>

A second important source of written materials from the Pāla period is the inscriptions that are found on stone and metal sculptures. There are numerous examples of inscribed sculptures in this exhibition. Many of these inscriptions record commendable deeds, particularly religious donations in the form of images (the image upon which the inscription appears) or other gifts to religious institutions. Interestingly, although the Pāla kings are known from other sources to have patronized religious establishments, not a single extant image inscription records the gift of a Pāla king. It may be inferred from the surviving examples that such donations most commonly were made by lay persons or monks. Sculptural inscriptions sometimes provide important historical information, such

as the date of the dedication or gift of the image, usually recorded as a regnal year of the current king; some identify the deity depicted in the image, some name the place where the image was made or dedicated, and others include prayers or religious verses. Buddhist images in particular often bear inscriptions recording a Buddhist consecratory formula that is commonly called the "Buddhist creed."<sup>13</sup> This formula may be inscribed legibly, for example, on stone sculptures, but it is often impressed into small, circular, buttonlike seals on the backs of Buddhist metal images, in which case the text is virtually illegible.

Images bearing dates are valuable in enabling historians to develop an accurate chronology of artistic developments.<sup>14</sup> Compared with most other schools of Indic sculpture, the Pāla idiom includes a more extensive body of such dated materials, thereby providing considerable internal documentation of the development of its artistic traditions. The origin of the practice of inscribing images and the reasons for its popularity during the Pāla period are unknown. It is notable, however, that Nepali images are likewise remarkable for their abundant inscriptions, many of which are also of a historical nature, suggesting a connection between the Pāla and Nepali use of this practice. The Chinese, too, for many centuries had inscribed their Buddhist images, often including the date of dedication. In contrast, the Tibetans, who fashioned much of their Buddhism on Pāla period models, only rarely included historical inscriptions on their images. Instead, Tibetan images generally bear inscribed religious prayers and sometimes the name of the deity.

Image inscriptions, like other epigraphs, are important not only for their contents, but because they provide information about the development of scripts and languages. In particular, identifiable features of the characters of a script at various points in history enable scholars to use paleography as a means of dating images.<sup>15</sup>

Other inscriptions of the Pāla period include examples on terracotta plaques, tablets, and seals, which usually contain standard religious formulae (cat. nos. 53-54). However, a few have yielded the names of monasteries and have been useful in establishing the identities of some of the religious institutions of the eastern Gangetic region. Probably once a major medium for inscriptional records, terracotta is also unfortunately fragile, and the vast majority of the hundreds of thousands of inscribed clay objects from the Pāla period have perished. Generally unbaked or fired at very low temperatures, the extant examples of these once prevalent artifacts have become precious treasures of a bygone era.

A number of epigraphs in non-Indic languages that were left by visitors to the region provide another important corpus of inscriptional remains. For example, at Bodh Gayā there is a famous Chinese inscription of A.D. 1021 left by the Chinese Buddhist priest Yunshu (Yun-shu).<sup>16</sup> This

lengthy epigraph records Yunshu's motivation for creating the inscription and its images, some of his Buddhist sentiments, and his mission to India on behalf of the sovereign of the Song empire. Shedding light on both the Pāla religious milieu and cultural exchanges between India and other Buddhist lands, this record and other pilgrims' records are invaluable in the reconstruction of many aspects of Pāla period culture.

Manuscripts provide yet another important source of written documents surviving from the Pāla period (cat. nos. 57-60). Literally thousands of palm-leaf manuscripts were produced during Pāla times. Some were copies of religious texts that had been composed in earlier periods but were still in use, while others must have been original compositions produced by the great sages and adepts of the time. Among the known Pāla period manuscripts, not a single example represents any of the texts or commentaries actually composed during the Pāla period. Instead, the surviving corpus of manuscripts includes only copies of pre-Pāla period texts. As far as is known, the extant manuscripts and manuscript fragments are religious texts, but it is likely that the manuscript format was used for works of literature, history, and other genres as well. Although only Buddhist manuscripts are known to have survived from the Pāla period, Jain and Hindu texts also must have been produced. The survival of Buddhist examples may be related serendipitously to the fact that Buddhist texts systematically were transported out of ancient India by Buddhist missionaries and pilgrims during the Pāla period and were preserved in the libraries of religious institutions in other countries, such as Nepal and Tibet (cat. nos. 58 and 60).

To historians of religion, the texts themselves are of paramount importance; for art historians, it is the illustrations that appear on many of the leaves that hold the greatest interest; for the historian, the crucial part of the manuscript is its colophon. The colophon consists of a series of notations appended to a copy of a text that may provide information about the text (such as its author, patron, date, and place of composition), as well as details about the specific copy (such as its scribe, patron, and place and date). Some colophons include dates that refer to Pāla kings or other fixed points in history that help to establish a chronological framework for the artistic and religious developments of the period. Unfortunately, only a handful of manuscripts survives from the original vast corpus of the Pāla period, and these invariably are mere fragments, often lacking their colophons.

Other written documents that inform us about the Pāla period include literary, religious, and other textual sources that were created for the first time by contemporary savants and great teachers. Since the known versions of such texts are survivals from later periods rather than original editions, they must be used cautiously when

inferring information about the Pāla period. Some of the most important texts<sup>17</sup> of this period include the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, parts of which are believed to have been written in Bengal in the late eighth century<sup>18</sup> and which provides a contemporary view of King Gopāla written from a Buddhist viewpoint; the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*, a collection of Sanskrit poetry compiled by the Buddhist monk Vidyākara, who lived in the latter half of the eleventh century in Bengal, which includes works drawn from the Bihar and Bengal region between 700 and 1050;<sup>19</sup> the *Rāmacarita*, an epic poem written by Sandhyākaranandin, a court poet in the reign of King Madanapāla,<sup>20</sup> which recounts the exploits of the Pāla king Rāmapāla and at the same time the story of the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma; the *Vimalaratnalekha*, which is a letter supposedly from the great Buddhist teacher and scholar Atīśa to King Nayapāla written while Atīśa was en route to Tibet;<sup>21</sup> the *Gitāgovinda*, a poem by Jayadeva, the court poet of King Lakṣmaṇasena of the Sena dynasty, which has become a classic of Indic literature and which is the earliest known work to name all ten of the major incarnations of the god Viṣṇu;<sup>22</sup> and the *Sekasubhadayā* (Advent of the Shaikh), which purports to date from the twelfth or thirteenth century and is ascribed to Halāyudha Miśra, the minister of King Lakṣmaṇasena of the Sena dynasty, but may be a text of the fifteenth or sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

A fortuitous result of the extensive internationalism of the Pāla period is that numerous non-Indic texts also provide records of the period and its legacy. Many of these texts date from periods later than the events they record and therefore are not always reliable in providing historical information. As might be expected, texts composed closest to the dates of the events are generally most reliable. Later works made use of earlier ones, thereby repeating and perpetuating both accurate and inaccurate information and also incorporating current legends and later information into their editions of earlier texts. Comprehensive works, like Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India*, are more reliable sources of information on later rather than earlier periods. Furthermore, most survive only in later recensions, which sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish earlier passages from later embellishments. Tibetan and Chinese materials are particularly rich as sources of knowledge about the Pāla period.

Some of the most important Tibetan sources include the biography of Chag lo tsa ba Chos rje dpal (Dharmasvāmin), who visited Bihar in 1234-1236;<sup>24</sup> the account of the life of Atīśa, printed around 1250 and written by mkhan po mChims thams chad mkhyen pa, who based his text on fragments of the work of kalyāṇamitra Phyaḡsor pa, who in turn had spent two years interviewing Atīśa's disciple Nag tsho about Atīśa;<sup>25</sup> *History of Buddhism*

(*Chos 'byung*), composed in 1322 by Bu ston Rin chen grub pa;<sup>26</sup> *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*), by 'Gos lo tsa ba gShon nu dpal, completed in 1478 and dealing primarily with Tibetan history;<sup>27</sup> *The Seven Instruction Lineages* (sometimes called the *Mine of Precious Stones*), by Tāranātha, composed around 1600;<sup>28</sup> *History of Buddhism in India* (*rGya gar chos 'byung*), by Tāranātha, completed in 1608;<sup>29</sup> *History of Buddhism: Its Rise, Decline and Downfall* (*dPag bsam ljon bzang*), by Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor, completed in 1747;<sup>30</sup> and *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti*, or lives of the eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, by Abhayadatta, which is believed to be a Pāla text of the late eleventh or early twelfth century and was translated into Tibetan as *Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyus* by sMon grub shes rab.<sup>31</sup>

A number of Chinese sources from the pre-Pāla period have survived and offer a comparative basis by which to examine the Pāla period contributions to the art, religion, and culture of eastern India. The most important are the travel accounts of Faxian (Fa-hsien), whose journey occurred around 399-414;<sup>32</sup> Yijing (I-tsing),<sup>33</sup> who was in India from 671-695; and Xuanzang, who travelled from 629-645.<sup>34</sup> Other important Chinese documents include the record of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Oukong (Ouk'ong), who visited India between 751 and 790, coinciding with the reigns of the earliest Pāla kings.<sup>35</sup> Chinese collections of religious texts and dynastic annals also shed light on the Pāla period.

Passing references to Pāla or other eastern Gangetic kings of the period occurring in records of contemporaneous kings elsewhere in South Asia, such as the Pratihāras or Cōḷas, are also helpful in reconstructing Pāla period history. In particular, scholars have made use of synchronisms between Pāla kings and their contemporaries to establish fixed points in Pāla chronology.

Because of the extensive international trade and travel of the period, it is likely that sources from the Arab world also include references to the Pāla kingdom. Some of the Muslim historians writing after the demise of the Pāla kingdom discuss the earlier history of the regions the Muslims controlled, but their accounts have not been utilized extensively by scholars. The most commonly cited historical work is *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*, composed by Maulānā Minhāj-ud-dīn Abū-'Umar-i-'Usmān around 1241.<sup>36</sup> The author apparently compiled the work while he was posted in Bengal by one of the Delhi sultans. The text is particularly informative about the Sena dynasty of Bengal, which ruled the region until the Muslim conquest. Other texts include *Riyāz-us-Salātīn*, by Ghulām Husn Salīm, which traces the history of Bengal from the invasion of Bakhtyār Khalji in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century to 1788.<sup>37</sup> Exploration of similar materials undoubtedly will prove fruitful for future research. Likewise, records of the kings of the Indian Ocean state of



Śrīvijaya and those of Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Kampuchea, Indonesia, and other regions in contact with the Pāla world may ultimately yield illuminating materials about the Pāla period.

While the importance of written documents cannot be overestimated, it is the material remains—the architecture, sculpture, painting, ceramics, and other artifacts—that ultimately provide the broadest, most comprehensive information about the religion, art, and culture of the period. While inscriptions and texts give only brief and random glimpses of the period, the archaeological and artistic remains provide a broad cross section and, therefore, a framework for study based on a far more representative sample of the data. Extant artifacts from virtually every phase and region of the Pāla domain enable scholars to understand cultural developments on a highly detailed basis. While it is common for scholars to accept literary and other written documents as providing more incontrovertible data about a period than the artistic remains, it can be argued that since material remains are products of the very periods in which they were made and not later recensions, as so often is the case with texts, they provide irrefutably reliable (if not always easily interpretable) information about a period. Such artistic remains from the Pāla period form the subject of the first part of this catalogue and exhibition. Further, because the artifacts of the Pāla style—including architecture, sculpture, and painting—were seminal in the formation of the artistic traditions of other regions of Asia, the material remains of these other cultures shed light on the Pāla period as well, as may be seen in the subsequent sections of the catalogue.

## RULING DYNASTIES OF THE PERIOD

### The Pāla Dynasty

The Pāla dynasty was a continuous lineage of kings, all descended from the first king of the line, Gopāla, but representing two branches of the family. (See Appendix III, Charts 1 and 2.) The earliest kings were descended from Dharmapāla, son of Gopāla, but the crown passed to descendants of another son of Gopāla after the reign of King Śūrapāla I (the great-grandson of Gopāla). The word “Pāla,” meaning “protector,” was added to the name of each of the rulers, following a standard South Asian practice of adding the dynastic name as a suffix to the names of the kings.

Most of the details of Pāla chronology and genealogy are fairly well known, having been a focus of scholarly attention for more than a century, but refinements are still being made. One important aspect of Pāla history has recently come to light with the discovery of a previously unknown copperplate grant that was found at Jagajjibanpur

in the Malda District of West Bengal in 1987.<sup>38</sup> This plate confirms that there was a Pāla king named Mahendrapāla who was the son of the third king of the line, Devapāla, and who ruled after his father and before his younger brother Śūrapāla. This individual is distinct from Mahendrapāla, a Pratihāra king. It had previously been thought that there was only one king named Mahendrapāla, the Pratihāra, and that he had usurped Pāla control of portions of Bihar for a brief time in the late ninth century. However, it can now be confirmed that the Pāla king Mahendrapāla, who is known from at least six sculptures inscribed with his name,<sup>39</sup> ruled for a period of at least fifteen years, as indicated by the highest regnal number in inscriptions referring to him. The Jagajjibanpur copperplate confirms that he was not an interloper, but a legitimate member of the Pāla lineage.<sup>40</sup> Charts 1 and 2 in Appendix III provide the most up-to-date chronology and genealogies thus far published, adding Mahendrapāla to the list of kings and adjusting the dates of subsequent monarchs based on an approximately fifteen-year reign for Mahendrapāla.<sup>41</sup>

In Buddhist histories and modern historical writings as well, the Pālas have been lauded as devout and generous Buddhist patrons. However, it is only possible to confirm the Buddhist leanings of a few Pāla kings with sound archaeological evidence.<sup>42</sup> Further, it appears that none of the Pālas patronized Buddhism to the exclusion of other sects. Therefore, Buddhism flourished because of other factors besides royal patronage; an active lay community and patronage by international visitors to the Pāla lands explain much of the artistic and religious vitality of the period.<sup>43</sup> Regardless of whether the Pālas were exclusive patrons and promoters of Buddhism in their homeland, it is clear that their tolerance and acceptance of the religion fostered its florescence within their kingdom. Other questions of patronage may be answered someday by further excavations of sites in the Pāla territories, including the most important religious center, Bodh Gayā, which has never been excavated. The capital cities of the Pālas are also unexcavated and would offer additional evidence regarding the Pālas as patrons of art. Regardless, the fact remains that the Pālas and their contemporaries governed the last major stronghold of Buddhism in India, even if they did not patronize it exclusively. Whether the Pāla rulers were motivated by a politically expedient recognition of the economic and strategic importance of the Buddhist sites within their realm, an enlightened social policy of religious tolerance and pluralism, or sincere religious belief, Buddhism prospered under their auspices.

### The Candra Dynasty

The Candras are a little-known dynasty that ruled portions of Bengal from the ninth century or earlier to the middle of

the eleventh century. Their lineage is known from three copperplates: one from Maināmati in Chittagong (formerly Comilla) District, one from Vikramapura in Dhaka District, and one from Paschimbhag in Sylhet District.<sup>44</sup> (For the lineage, see Appendix III, Chart 3.) Three images found in Faridpur, Dhaka, and Chittagong (formerly Comilla) districts of Bangladesh are inscribed with dates in the reigns of Candra kings.<sup>45</sup> Based on the findspots of the copperplates and the images, it is apparent that the Candras ruled in Vaṅga (central Bengal), Samatāṭa (southeastern Bengal), and Sylhet (the eastern territories). Their original homeland is unknown. However, a family of kings known as the Candras ruled in Arakan (now part of Myanmar [Burma]) from the fourth century, and it has been suggested that during the reign of the Myanmari king Aniruddha (1044-1077), the Candras were forced out of their territories. Apparently a branch moved into the Bengal region known as Pattikera in Chittagong (formerly Comilla) District.<sup>46</sup> If the Bengal and Arakan Candras belong to the same family, important connections between the artistic styles of Bengal and Myanmar (Burma) might be explained.<sup>47</sup> The wide geographical distribution of the copperplates and sculptures with Candra inscriptions indicates that the Candra domain must have been considerable at some point. Further, controlling Vaṅga, with its urban center of Vikramapura and confluence of important riverways, the Candras' influence may have been significant.

### The Sena Dynasty

Another important family ruling in the eastern Gangetic region during the so-called Pāla period is the Sena dynasty, which reigned from about 1095 to 1230. (See Appendix III, Chart 4.)<sup>48</sup> In early scholarship on the history of the region, the period was called the "Pāla-Sena" period, suggesting that the Senas enjoyed a status equal to that of the Pālas. However, it is clear that the Senas ruled not only for a much shorter period than the Pālas, but that their territories were not nearly as extensive. Since the Senas ruled concurrently with the last Pāla kings and only outlasted them by a short period, the whole historical phase may still be designated by the Pāla name, while acknowledging the fact that certain holdings in Bihar and Bengal were at times not under Pāla rule. In addition, just as other dynasts held sway during the period of Pāla supremacy, other minor dynasties coexisted with the Senas.<sup>49</sup> These competing factions, along with rebellions of feudal chiefs, may have contributed to the eventual downfall of the Senas, although the final blow was dealt to King Lakṣmaṇasena by Bakhtyār Khaljī in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.

The Senas are known through copperplate inscriptions, literary sources, and one image that is probably dated in the reign of King Lakṣmaṇasena.<sup>50</sup> One of their

capitals was Vikramapura in Dhaka District of Bangladesh, again suggesting the strategic importance of this region favored by the confluence of Bengal's most important rivers. Sena chronology is fairly well known. The original home of the Senas has not been identified; however, it is believed that they were Karṇāṭas from south India and that they might have migrated to Bengal when a south Indian king of the Cōḷa dynasty, Rājendra Cōḷa, made his expedition to the Ganges River before 1023 with the putative purpose of bringing sacred water from the river to sanctify the Cōḷa lands.<sup>51</sup> There is little doubt that the Senas were Hindu kings, devoted to the gods Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Sūrya. Under the Senas the Hindu culture of Bengal reached an apogee that unfortunately was terminated prematurely with the invasions of Muslims into their territory. Led by the Turk Bakhtyār Khaljī, whose raids occurred between 1192 and 1193 or between 1203 and 1204, the Muslim newcomers imposed their own social and religious system upon that of the populace of their conquered lands.

The Bengalis regard the Senas as the last great Hindu monarchs of Bengal, whose patronage fostered enduring works of art and literature. Some of the Sena kings were themselves gifted authors. The poet Jayadeva, author of the celebrated *Gītāgovinda*, served at the court of the last important Sena king, Lakṣmaṇasena.

### RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Two major religious traditions predominated in the Pāla territories: Buddhism and Hinduism (Brahmanism). Neither tradition was monolithic, for each encompassed many schools of thought and practice. Further, the two systems overlapped and shared an underlying world-view characterized by certain basic principles. These included a belief in *saṃsāra*, a cycle of births and rebirths to which all living beings are subject; *karma*, a universal law of cause and effect by which good is rewarded and bad is punished through higher and lower rebirths as one moves through the cycle of births; *māyā*, the illusionary nature of the phenomenal world and its corollary, skepticism about the physical world and a desire to find truth beyond the material; and, finally, the possibility of liberation from the bondage of *saṃsāra* and the physical world through the attainment of *nirvāṇa* (extinction or quiescence) in Buddhism or *mokṣa* (release or liberation) in Hinduism. Within each system there were many schools that propounded different methods of attaining these goals, some of which were incompatible and led to a proliferation of schisms and subschools. Because both religious systems had been evolving for millennia, by the Pāla period each was highly developed and had generated vast bodies of textual materials and complex artistic and iconographic forms.

Hinduism and Buddhism both held that the religious goal was ultimate, but at the same time recognized that not all are equally ready for its challenges. Thus, although in early Buddhism monasticism was the ideal path for religious achievement, lay worshippers were not pressured to give up their lives in the everyday world, but were encouraged to improve their *karma* through the performance of meritorious acts and charitable deeds. As supporters of monks, nuns, hermits, ascetics, and others who chose to devote their lives to religious attainment, lay devotees were a crucial element in Buddhist society. In contrast, Hindu religious practices were embedded in a social system of inherited occupational castes, with the *brāhmaṇa* caste responsible for performing ceremonies and rituals for members of the other groups in society. Although it is likely that Hindus had institutionalized settings for the practice of their religion similar to Buddhist monasteries, information about such hermitages (*āśramas*) during the Pāla period has not survived. In any case, the Hindu religion was not predicated upon monasticism and did not develop the elaborate monastic institutions characteristic of Buddhism. Instead, the principal religious institution of the Hindus was the temple, which was the stage for religious ceremonies and the focus of much of daily life. Unlike Buddhism, Hinduism was not a proselytizing religion. Instead, undoubtedly as a corollary to its complex social system, it was predicated upon being born into the system rather than conversion, although one might shift one's primary allegiance from one Hindu deity to another or from one sect to another.

Hindu and Buddhist images often have been discovered at the same sites in the eastern Gangetic region, and some writers have claimed that there was considerable syncretism between the two religions during the Pāla period. Undeniable evidence of actual syncretism, however, is meager, consisting of only a handful of the thousands of surviving images and a few textual references that deliberately seem to combine features of the two religions. In fact, there is not a single survival of an undisturbed archaeological site that shows Buddhist and Hindu images of equal importance simultaneously installed side-by-side as objects of worship during the Pāla period. Further, it does not appear from literary or artistic remains that there was a melding of the religions. Certainly there were many parallel developments within the religions during the Pāla period, including emphasis on female deities, wrathful (*krodha*) deities, and other concepts, but these parallelisms arose out of the shared intellectual climate of the times rather than syncretic or ecumenical processes.

While the social systems of the two religious systems differed greatly, belief in one religion did not preclude acceptance of many of the beliefs and practices of the other. Reverence for Buddhas and Buddhist deities could be

shared with reverence for Hindu gods. Inscriptions, such as those found on the copperplates issued by the Pāla kings, clearly indicate devotion to both Buddhist and Hindu divinities. Thus, the two religious systems were not necessarily incompatible or mutually exclusive.

In the early Pāla period, Buddhism in its various forms was the main religious force, although Hindu practices were also in evidence. In the late Pāla period, mainly the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Hinduism gained dominance, particularly worship of the god Viṣṇu. To some extent, this shift in popularity from Buddhism to Hinduism is part of a geographic shift of the cultural heartland of the kingdom from Bihar, primarily Magadha, the homeland of Buddhism, to Bengal, which did not have a legacy of such strong Buddhist ties and which had been strengthening its Hindu associations through a program of active settlement of *brāhmaṇas* since the Gupta period.

## Buddhism

The great appeal of Buddhism both to the Indic populace and devotees from abroad is based on many factors: its nontheistic humanism, its teaching of compassion and humility, its emphasis on moral and ethical perfection, its democratic outlook and casteless society, its pacificism, and its promises for betterment in a next life. In addition, the Buddhist world-view was highly compatible with other religious systems, such as Daoism (Taoism) in China and Bon in Tibet, thus enabling non-Indian followers of the religion to integrate it easily with their already strong religious and cultural predilections. As a proselytizing religion, Buddhism was successful in attracting new adherents, though the reasons for adopting the religion varied greatly among its converts.

The predominant form of Buddhism of the day was Mahāyāna, a cluster of methodologies that emphasize the Bodhisattva (enlightenment-seeking being) ideal and the principle that Buddhahood is attainable by all—monastics and laity alike. There are many kinds of Bodhisattvas at every level of Buddhist attainment. On the simplest level, any devotee may become a Bodhisattva by taking a vow to attempt to attain spiritual perfection. During his previous lives and in the pre-enlightenment phase of his last life, Śākyamuni himself was a Bodhisattva devoted to spiritual advancement. The stories of the Buddha Śākyamuni's past lives, as recounted in the *jātakas*, provide a lively narrative portrayal of the exemplary qualities of a Bodhisattva, such as generosity, patience, cooperativeness, truthfulness, philosophical profundity, and meditative stability. Every walk of life presents opportunities to cultivate these virtues, which accounts in part for the broad appeal and accessibility of the Mahāyāna movement. The term Bodhisattva is also used to refer to a number of



already perfected Bodhisattvas known as Mahāsattva Bodhisattvas (great being, enlightenment being), who are popularly depicted in Pāla period art. Mahāsattva Bodhisattvas have perfected transcendent wisdom (*prajñā*) and infinite compassion (*karuṇā*), and, having eradicated self-interest, dedicate themselves to the liberation of others with a heroic resolve that makes them deserved objects of refuge and devotion. Although fully capable of taking the final step to achieving Buddhahood, these enlightened beings choose to remain in their Bodhisattva forms to serve as guides to others in their quest.

A major branch of Mahāyāna that rose to prominence during the Pāla period was Tantric Buddhism, also known as Mantrayāna or Vajrayāna Buddhism. Tantric Buddhism shared the philosophy and goal of Mahāyāna, but developed different methods for achieving liberation. Whereas the Mahāyāna path is a gradual process of purification that may take many lifetimes, tantra uses concrete, sometimes dramatic methods to break through unenlightened patterns of thought directly and quickly, offering the possibility of Buddhahood in a single lifetime to any individual with enough fortitude to follow its steeper path. The tantric repertoire of religious practices included yogic disciplines, magical and initiatory rituals, and deliberate immersion in situations meant to repulse or terrify, such as meditation in a cremation ground, in order to evoke primal psychic responses and then to transform them. The use of sexual symbolism in tantric imagery has sometimes been misunderstood by those outside of the tradition, but in fact only those who have been initiated into its practices can fully understand the import of the esoteric symbols.

Two of the key tantric meditational tools are *mantras* and *maṇḍalas*. *Mantras* (or *dhāraṇīs*) are syllables whose purpose relates not to any literal meaning they may or may not have, but to the effects of their recitation. Tantric Buddhism is sometimes called Mantrayāna, or Mantra Vehicle, because it emphasizes the use of *mantras* to attain magical powers (*siddhis*) and induce meditative experiences. The *maṇḍala* is a geometric ground plan of the divine mansion that serves as a residence for Buddhist deities. Situated atop Mount Meru at the center of the Buddhist universe, the structure represents a meditational map for the complex visualizations on the path to liberation, and thus constitutes an important subject of Tantric Buddhist art.

Tantric Buddhism is esoteric, which means that an aspirant cannot gain access to the teachings and practices without initiation by a tantric master. The tantric master, or *guru*, acts as an experienced guide who closely monitors each initiate's progress and assigns practices precisely suited to that student's temperament and level of attainment. Tantric practitioners are called yogis (male) and yoginis (female), or, more commonly, *siddhas*. The

most highly accomplished among them were known as Mahāsiddhas (great tantric adepts), who are considered to be enlightened beings. This group includes men and women from all walks of life and backgrounds, from royalty to the lowliest members of society. The ethos of Pāla period Tantric Buddhism is vividly portrayed in the biographies of the Mahāsiddhas, many of which have been preserved in literature. The venue of *siddha* practice was largely nonmonastic, but the teachings, practices, writings, and iconographic repertoire of the Mahāsiddhas were incorporated into the curricula of the monastic colleges, like Nālandā. Although representations of Mahāsiddhas are extremely rare in the extant art of the Pāla period, the popularity of the subject in the art of the Himalayan regions, particularly Nepal and Tibet, and of China (cat. no. 160) suggests a Pāla source. One of the principal texts on *siddha* practice, the *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti*, was apparently composed in the Pāla kingdom and recorded the lives of *siddhas* who lived during Pāla times.<sup>52</sup>

The contemporary developments in Tantric Buddhism document the intellectual vitality of the period and the special brilliance of a number of Buddhist teachers who lived at the time. From its stronghold in Pāla India, Tantric Buddhism circulated in China and Southeast Asia and became the predominant form of Buddhism in Nepal, Tibet, and other regions of the Himalayas.<sup>53</sup>

Because the Pāla region, with its Buddhist homeland, was so vital to Buddhists everywhere, forms of Buddhism popular in other regions of Asia but not in the Pāla lands at large were also represented at Pāla establishments and holy sites. In Sri Lanka and portions of Southeast Asia during the Pāla period, Buddhism based on the early textual tradition written in the Pāli language<sup>54</sup> was flourishing, and groups of monks practicing this form of Buddhism, probably mostly travellers from other Asian countries, are known to have resided at sites in the Pāla territories. Differing fundamentally from Mahāyāna Buddhists, who believe in the possibility of Buddhahood for all, followers of the Pāli textual tradition emphasize the ideal of the Arhat as the perfected being, while the possibility of full Buddhahood is believed to be attainable by only a few. Literary evidence from as late as the thirteenth century attests to the presence of Pāli tradition Buddhists at Bodh Gayā.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, in Pāla period Magadha, some of the most traditional forms of the religion flourished alongside the most progressive thinking then taking place within the walls of the Pāla monasteries and among the tantric practitioners living outside of institutionalized settings.

All of these diverse approaches to Buddhist attainment exalted the life of Śākyamuni as the epitome and archetype of individual attainment. Because Magadha and the surrounding region, where Śākyamuni Buddha

lived most of his life, was the matrix of Buddhism, it became a holy land to Buddhists of all schools and sects from India and abroad. Even though Buddhism spread to other regions of India and Asia, this holy land remained its core and a center of pilgrimage, for it contained a network of holy sites associated with Śākyamuni Buddha himself. These sacred sites were more than mere reminders of the Buddha's life and the landmarks of his career—they were considered to be saturated with the living presence of the Buddha and endowed with a spiritual power that can only be understood in relationship to three concepts central to Buddhist thinking: *śarīraka* (bodily relics), *paribhogaka* (objects of use), and *uddeśaka* (significant symbols or reminders).

The name *śarīraka* applies to bodily relics of the Buddha, such as a tooth, a hair, a nail, a fragment of bone, or his cremated ashes. Such bodily remains of the Buddha, generally enshrined in a structure known as a *stūpa*, were the focus of much of early Buddhism and its rituals. Indeed, the cult of relics and pilgrimage and devotion to the Buddhist *stūpas* that enshrined them were among the most important practices of early Buddhism. This is not surprising, since Śākyamuni Buddha himself is credited with having endorsed the enshrining of his relics and the construction and worship of *stūpas*.<sup>56</sup> His relics and their whereabouts were well known during the early centuries following his great decease, thus enabling the cult to flourish. Subsequently, emphasis on other Buddhas besides Śākyamuni and on other objects of veneration, such as the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, gained popularity as well, but reverence for the Buddha's relics has never diminished.

The term *paribhogaka* refers to things that the Buddha used, including anything he touched and any place he visited, rested at, or even passed through. Thus, the *bodhi* tree and its leaves are sacred because they were used by the Buddha. The places of his birth and his first sermon, the sites where he performed his various miracles, and every place he traversed during his lifetime would be considered *paribhogaka*. Much of the Magadha region consists of *paribhogaka* places, occasioning its extreme importance to Buddhists throughout the world. In fact, the sites in Magadha and the adjacent regions of Uttar Pradesh and his birthplace in what is now part of Nepal constitute the only verifiable *paribhogaka* places in Buddhism. There are numerous local traditions in other regions of ancient India and throughout Buddhist Asia that the Buddha travelled outside of this region—for example, to Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Gandhāra (in modern Pakistan). While such accounts record the legendary rather than the historical, their existence documents the importance of *paribhogaka* places in Buddhism, for they indicate that Buddhists everywhere longed to experience the religious power of *paribhogaka* places and to extend the sacred topography of Buddhism into their own

homelands. The powerfulness of *paribhogaka* places may partially explain why replicas of the sacred Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā, which was erected to mark the spot where the Buddha attained enlightenment, were created in a number of other places in Asia, including Nepal, Tibet, Myanmar (Burma), and Thailand.<sup>57</sup> Pilgrimage to *paribhogaka* places, like pilgrimage to *śarīraka* places, was vital to Buddhist practice from the earliest traceable times.

The third term, *uddeśaka* (representations or reminders), refers to images or other allusions to the Buddha that are unrelated to his body or anything with which he came in contact. All sculptures, paintings, and other objects that depict him or otherwise refer to him—including many of the works of art in this exhibition—are considered to be *uddeśaka*. In spite of the absence of a physical association with the Buddha, *uddeśaka* objects are believed to embody his presence.

Along with *śarīraka* objects, the *paribhogaka* places provided the main impetus for pilgrimage in the Buddhist world.<sup>58</sup> But by the Pāla period, many of the relic sites, which were scattered throughout the Indic regions, were located in kingdoms that were by then populated primarily by Hindus. Without active lay support, their vitality as places of pilgrimage diminished, and it is likely that in some cases, all traces of once-flourishing centers were lost. In contrast, the area of Magadha, the Nepal Terai, and the adjacent region of Uttar Pradesh that comprised the network of *paribhogaka* sites was flourishing and a congenial host to devout Buddhists. Within this region, the sites were easily accessible to one another and did not require the lengthy and arduous journeys necessary for visiting the known relic sites.

While all places associated with any moment in the Buddha's life would be *paribhogaka*, during the Pāla period, eight sites in Magadha and the adjacent region of what is now Uttar Pradesh and one in Nepal became the focus of pilgrimage and were incorporated into a standard pilgrimage route.<sup>59</sup> One of these sites, Kuśinagara, also had bodily relics. In the chronological order of the corresponding events in the Buddha's life, the sites were: Lumbinī (now in Nepal), where he was born; Bodh Gayā, in Magadha, where his enlightenment took place; Sārnāth, in Uttar Pradesh, where he taught his first disciples; the Jetavanārāma at Śrāvastī, in Uttar Pradesh, where he displayed his supernatural powers; Sāmkāśya, in Uttar Pradesh, where he descended from Trāyastriṃśa heaven after preaching to his mother; Rājagṛha, in Magadha, where he tamed the wild elephant Nālāgiri that had been unleashed by his rivalrous cousin Devadatta; the Monkey's Pond in Vaiśālī, in Tīrabhukti, where he accepted a gift of honey offered by a monkey; and Kuśinagara, in Uttar Pradesh, where his death (*parinirvāṇa*) occurred. The eight events that occurred at these sites are known as the

*aṣṭamahāprātihārya* ("eight great illusory displays") (see Appendix I). Associated with these major sites were numerous subsites, which devotees also would visit. For example, near Bodh Gayā and relating to the enlightenment phase of the Buddha's life were Sujātā's Place, where a woman named Sujātā fortified him with a bowl of thick milk soup prior to his enlightenment meditations, and the Nairāñjanā River, which he crossed on his way to the sacred *bodhi* tree.

The artistic sphere of Pāla art, and sometimes even the boundaries of the empire, extended into Uttar Pradesh, further unifying the Buddhist holy land. At Kuśinagara, which is now in Uttar Pradesh, major images of the Pāla school were installed. Therefore, the modern boundaries should not be viewed as inviolable cultural divisions. The Tibetans, who looked to the Buddha's homeland as a focus of their religious practices, did not distinguish the territories but referred to the whole pilgrimage region as *dBus*, meaning "center," thereby expressing its centrality to their religious universe.

It does not seem surprising that four of the events and their associated sites would become so renowned as places of Buddhist pilgrimage; that is, it is easy to understand why the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and death were considered to be the four major events. The Buddha himself is credited with having said that his followers could be consoled and inspired after his death by visiting the sites of these four events "with feelings of reverence and awe."<sup>60</sup> But regarding what are usually called the four minor events—that is, the display of supernatural powers, descent from Trāyastriṃśa, taming of the elephant, and gift of honey from the monkey—one might ask why they, out of all the miraculous and instructional acts performed by the Buddha, were selected and given such prominence. Conversely, one might question why, for example, the Buddha's conversion of the robber Aṅgulimāla, an event that occurred near Śrāvastī, was not considered a key event, for it is an eloquent demonstration of the Buddha's power to overcome evil.<sup>61</sup> It is possible that the choice of the eight events was deliberate and was linked to esoteric symbolism or other religious factors; however, it is also likely that certain accidents of historical events may have led inadvertently to the prominence of some sites and events rather than others.<sup>62</sup>

Depictions of these eight events (*aṣṭamahāprātihārya*) and, by extension, the eight holy places where they occurred, became one of the most prevalent subjects of Pāla period sculpture and painting alike. Although the Pāla artists cannot claim to have invented the subject matter, since prototypes for single and grouped life scenes occur in the art of earlier periods, they can be credited with standardizing and popularizing the subject. Images representing these events symbolize the Buddhist

holy land itself and all of the *paribhogaka* places within it. Perhaps serving as meditational surrogates for pilgrimage to these sites, the images were powerful reminders of the sacred geography of the Buddha's homeland.

Among the eight sites, the most important during the Pāla period was Bodh Gayā, where Śākyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment under the sacred *bodhi* tree.<sup>63</sup> Portrayals of the Buddha under the *bodhi* tree seated on the Vajrāsana (adamantine seat or diamond seat) constitute the single most popular subject in Pāla period Buddhist art. When several Buddha life scenes appear together in a single composition, the Bodh Gayā scene is most commonly placed in the center and is the largest of the group. The artistic traditions of Pāla-inspired regions, such as Myanmar (Burma), Tibet, China, and Thailand, also display this subject as one of the most popular artistic themes. Further, literary evidence and inscriptional evidence indicate the site's overwhelming importance to international visitors, like those from Tibet and Myanmar (Burma), who held the place in the highest esteem. As further evidence of the preeminence of Bodh Gayā, the Pāla kings themselves incorporated the symbolism of the Vajrāsana Buddha into their royal decrees.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the holy sites, which were important to Buddhists of all sects, numerous monasteries and monastic universities flourished during the period. The existence of the monasteries depended upon a thriving, active lay community. Through the practice of *dāna* (gift-giving), the laity supported the monastic establishments, providing robes, food, and shelter for the monks and nuns, as well as copies of texts, images, paintings, and the ritual objects needed for their religious practices. A symbiotic relationship between the *saṃgha* and the lay population was the foundation of a viable Buddhist society. Without the munificence of an active lay community to care for them, the monks could not devote themselves completely to religious activities. By helping the monks fulfill their vows of poverty by providing for their needs, members of the lay community also benefitted, for these generous acts helped them attain merit and improve their *karma*. Judging from the substantial evidence of lavish patronage during the Pāla period, it may be surmised that, for much of the period, the economy flourished. Located near the major commercial rivers of South Asia—the Ganges River and its tributaries—enriched by Magadha's abundant natural resources, and stimulated by wealth brought to the region by foreign visitors, the Pāla period Buddhist monasteries enjoyed a golden age.

The name of Bihar state derives from the word *vihāra*, meaning monastery, reflecting the fact that the region was once densely populated with monastic establishments. During the Pāla period, great monastic institutions, called *mahāvihāras*, also flourished. These large, complex establishments, often having several



thousand monks in residence, were the universities of their day. Within the walls of these institutions, some of the greatest intellectual advances of the Pāla age took place. Some of the *mahāvihāras* were premier educational institutions of international repute, drawing students from throughout Asia. As centers of both religious and secular learning, these monasteries offered rigorous curricula that included ritual and meditation, philosophy, philology, fine arts, astronomy, medicine, and mathematics. Education was rigorous and included training in the texts and teachings of the various schools of Buddhism. Instruction occurred on a teacher-disciple basis, with much of what was taught being esoteric in nature, requiring initiation by a master and open only to those who were ready to receive the teachings.

The temples, dormitories, and other structures of these institutions, now mostly destroyed, must have represented some of the finest and most generously endowed architectural monuments of the period. The images installed in them, the paintings that adorned their walls, and other artistic creations necessary for the religious practices of the monks, were probably created by workshops of artists working nearby. The largest monasteries apparently had permanent ateliers in their vicinity, and, based on the discovery of images at various monastic sites, it is possible to identify some associated schools of art. Smaller, less well endowed monasteries may have had minor workshops with artists whose work was heavily indebted to those of the major centers of production.

Nālandā, in the heart of Magadha, was clearly one of the most celebrated monastic establishments of the Pāla period and was renowned throughout the Buddhist world. Traditional history about the monastery contends that it was founded at the time of the Buddha. The Pāli texts take Nālandā to be the birthplace of the Buddha's disciple Śāriputra,<sup>65</sup> and Tāranātha relates that King Aśoka of the Maurya dynasty in the third century B.C. gave offerings to the *stūpa* of Śāriputra there and erected a temple over it.<sup>66</sup> At the time of Xuanzang's visit to Nālandā in the seventh century, it was a flourishing center of Buddhism. During the Pāla period, its renown increased, as may be verified by the extensiveness of the archaeological remains of the period. It has been estimated that Nālandā had as many as ten thousand monks in residence, but it is more likely that about three thousand monks resided there.<sup>67</sup> The monastery was noted for its selective admission standards and the difficulty of its entrance exams, as well as its brilliant, progressive thinkers, some of whom were among the most illustrious monks and teachers of their time. Scholars from other countries, such as China and Tibet, came to the Pāla lands specifically to study under some of the masters at Nālandā.

Archaeological excavation of Nālandā has revealed

foundations only as early as the mid-fifth century A.D., although future excavations might uncover earlier structures. That the monastery in question is definitely Nālandā has been verified by a number of means, including the discovery at and near the site of clay seals and sculptures inscribed with the name of the monastery. Literary texts referring to the place as a suburb of Rājagṛha also confirm the position of Nālandā in relation to other known sites.<sup>68</sup> The importance of Nālandā for historical and art historical scholarship has greatly been enhanced by the fact that it has not only been identified, but also partially scientifically excavated. The actual site of the monastery encompasses an area of several square kilometers, much of which is today occupied by villages such as Bargaon and Jagdiśpur. Because so many sculptures have been retrieved from the excavations at Nālandā, it has been possible to establish the main characteristics of some of the artistic schools at the site.<sup>69</sup>

There is conflicting evidence regarding whether the Pāla kings played a major role in patronizing the establishment, although it is clear that they had at least some involvement in its administration.<sup>70</sup> Royal patronage by a foreign king verifies the international fame of Nālandā, for the inscription on a copperplate grant found at the site records a grant of (the revenues from) five villages for the comfort of the monks and for the upkeep of a monastery at Nālandā by King Bālaputradeva of Suvarṇadvīpa (Sumatra, in Indonesia).<sup>71</sup> The inscription is dated in the thirty-ninth regnal year of King Devapāla, who sanctioned the gift. The relationship between the artistic styles and iconography of metal images from Nālandā and some found in Indonesia can partially be explained in connection with this royal gift.<sup>72</sup>

Once an academy of international distinction, by the time the Tibetan Dharmasvāmin visited Nālandā, in 1235, the place was in ruins. However, the date and circumstances of its destruction and abandonment are unknown.<sup>73</sup>

Uddanāpura has been identified as a monastic establishment located at present-day Bihār Sharīf in Nalanda District (formerly Patna District), Bihar, in the Magadha region. According to Tibetan sources, it was founded by King Gopāla on a lake that had miraculously evaporated.<sup>74</sup> Bu ston attributes the founding of the monastery to King Dharmapāla, but Tāranātha and Sum pa mkhan po say that it was built magically and then entrusted to King Devapāla. It is unlikely that Uddanāpura was founded by Dharmapāla, since it was the model for bSam yas monastery, built in Tibet for King Khri srong lde brtsan. If bSam yas was built in 749, as given in some accounts, then Uddanāpura cannot have been founded by Dharmapāla, whose reign is now securely dated to about 775-812. Instead, it was probably already flourishing during his reign.

Like Nālandā, Uddanāpura hosted some of the

most famous Buddhist teachers of the Pāla period. Most notably, Atiśa, the great *paṇḍita* responsible for the Second Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, studied at Uddanāpura for two years under Dharmarakṣita during the eleventh century, then went to Vikramaśīla, where he was appointed to a high post and stayed until he left for Tibet. In spite of its importance, very little about the monastery's artistic history is known. A number of sculptures have been found at Bihār Sharīf, including several dated examples,<sup>75</sup> and a corpus of poorly documented sculptures is likely to be from the site,<sup>76</sup> but the parameters of the affiliated architectural and artistic styles have not yet been established.

The fate of Uddanāpura is well known because its destruction in the late twelfth century by Bakhtyār Khaljī and his Muslim army was recorded in historical documents.<sup>77</sup> While it is sometimes claimed that Bakhtyār Khaljī and his men mistook the walled enclosure for a fortress, it is clear from various accounts that the Muslims intended to destroy the monasteries and kill the shaven-headed monks. Apparently, Bakhtyār Khaljī presented books from the destroyed monastery's libraries to the Muslim sultan in Delhi as a kind of trophy. In 1234, when Dharmasvāmin visited the place, it was being used as a Muslim military headquarters.<sup>78</sup>

Vikramaśīla, in the region of ancient Aṅga to the east of Magadha, was also one of the most important Pāla period monasteries, where some of the most progressive Buddhist thinking of the day took place. Recent archaeological excavations at Antichak in the Bhagalpur District of Bihar have tentatively identified the site as Vikramaśīla.<sup>79</sup> Possibly founded by King Dharmapāla,<sup>80</sup> this monastery apparently also had been destroyed by the time of Dharmasvāmin's visit in the thirteenth century.

Vikramaśīla was especially important to the Tibetans because Atiśa, an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and the key figure in the Second Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, spent a lengthy period of residence there. While at Vikramaśīla, he received repeated offers and gifts of gold from the King of Gu ge (in Tibet), trying to convince the monk to come to Tibet to teach. Atiśa eventually consented and went to Tibet, carrying with him not only the intellectual heritage of Vikramaśīla and other Pāla monasteries but also sixty loads of goods on thirty horses.<sup>81</sup> These goods would have included the manuscripts and images that were essential to his teaching activities, thus undoubtedly helping to spread the Vikramaśīla and related artistic traditions to Tibet. Although Atiśa intended to return to Vikramaśīla after three years, he remained in Tibet and eventually died there around 1054. His teaching mission in Tibet led to the foundation of what are known as the gSar ma (New) schools of Tibetan Buddhism, which are treated in detail in the Tibetan section of this catalogue.

Two important monasteries in Bengal were

Somapura in the region of Puṇḍravardhana and Jaggaddala in Varendra. Somapura, identified as Pāhārpur, where an impressive temple complex has been excavated, was apparently originally a Jain holy place, but during the Pāla period it became a Buddhist establishment. Its main temple, a storied, cruciform structure, has been compared to similar edifices in Southeast Asia and is sometimes said to be a prototype for Southeast Asian examples, though it is not known whether this specific structure or others of its type were the basis for the Southeast Asian forms. The temple was surrounded by a large courtyard bounded by a walled enclosure with monastic cells. A number of sculptures have been found in excavations at the site, some of which display the most esoteric symbolism of the period. Jaggaddala, a Tantric Buddhist monastery that flourished during the reign of Rāmapāla (ca. late eleventh and early twelfth centuries), has not been identified archaeologically. However, it enjoyed considerable acclaim, as it was mentioned in the *Rāmacarita* as one of the glories of the Varendra region.<sup>82</sup>

An island of flourishing Buddhism in an otherwise predominantly Hindu world, the Pāla lands were the last stronghold of Buddhism in India. Although other pockets of Buddhism survived in a few places outside the Pāla kingdom, such as in the south at Kāñcīpuram and Nāgapaṭṭinam, in Kashmir, in Orissa, and at Sāñcī, on the whole South Asia was ruled by Hindu kings and populated by Hindu practitioners. Were it not for contact with the Buddhist world outside of the Indic realm, Buddhism might not have thrived there during this period, for foreign visitors played a major role in the sustenance of the Buddhist community.

A dominant religious system in ancient India for well over a thousand years, Buddhism had been eclipsed by Hindu practices by about the sixth century. The rise of Hinduism and the decline of Buddhism in the post-Gupta periods of Indic history is an easily observed phenomenon, but one that has never fully been explained. Numerous reasons, complexly intertwined, must account for the spread of Hinduism and its concomitant overshadowing of Buddhism. The reasons were not limited to religious factors, but must have included geographic, political, and economic factors as well. The strength of many of the Hindu kings who ruled various portions of the South Asian subcontinent during the Pāla hegemony in the northeast led to the formation of extensive Hindu empires, such as those of the Cōla and Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasties. Lacking the religious heritage of the Buddhist homeland, Buddhist activity in their kingdoms waned over the centuries.

Another reason for a shift away from Buddhism may be suggested here. One of the means of demonstrating religious knowledge and attracting followers in ancient India was through intellectual tournaments, or public debates, known as disputations. Buddhist disputations

held against *tīrthikas* (adherents of non-Buddhist religions) often evoked great interest among the populace and were patronized by kings. Xuanzang described an annual disputation convened by King Harṣa (reigned 606-647), the Chinese monk's patron in India.<sup>83</sup> Known as a Mokṣa Festival, it included several rounds of disputations among the most learned scholars of the day in the presence of an enthusiastic public audience. Tibetan and Chinese sources tell of great monks who won eminence and patronage through their performance at such convocations, and it is easy to see the propagandistic value such events would have held. Continual losses by prominent Buddhist monks could have led to shifting allegiances among the royalty and the populace. Yijing, who also visited India during the seventh century, described the rigorous training that Buddhist monks underwent and noted that some of the most erudite monks were able to "oppose the heretics as they would drive beasts (deer) in the middle of a plain, and explain away disputations as boiling water melts frost."<sup>84</sup> But Yijing also observed that such invincible disputants appear only rarely, perhaps only once or twice in a generation. Little by little, losses at disputations may have contributed to a diminishment of Buddhist prestige and adherents.

Economic and political factors notwithstanding, the shift from Buddhism to Hinduism was also arguably a predictable outcome of the sustained contact between the two traditions. Buddhist and Hindu scholars may have locked horns in disputations, but in the process they became familiar with one another's doctrines and philosophies. Throughout the Gupta period Hinduism was able to draw on the intellectual resources of scholastic Buddhism and eventually to develop some of its most stunning philosophical articulations in response, using Buddhist forms of argument and logic in the service of ancient theistic and monistic doctrines. Similar processes stimulated Hindu advances in the areas of literature, art, iconography, and devotionism. Challenged and vitalized by its chief competitor, Hinduism rose to new heights of brilliance, overtaking its religious rivals and gaining popularity that it has retained to the present day.

## Hinduism

The religion that today most people know as Hinduism is not a unitary system of beliefs and practices. It did not have a single founder, there are no texts to which all Hindus subscribe, and the spectrum of Hindu doctrines spans a variety of extremes. Hinduism as it is practiced by the laity generally consists of devotion to a number of deities and propitiation of these gods and goddesses through ceremonies, sacrifices, and offerings. Like Buddhism, Hinduism had a tradition of asceticism,

including holy men and women, yogis and yoginis, and others who took vows of poverty and were homeless wanderers, living in groups or as lone mendicants or hermits. In contrast to Buddhism, monasticism was never a principal component of the Hindu tradition, although some monastic institutions did develop. A key element of Hinduism is its caste system, essentially a social order based on birth, in which the high or low position one inherits in society is seen as the inevitable outcome and reflection of one's accumulated merit (*karma*) as one moves through the cycle of rebirths (*samsāra*). Priests and all other members of society are bound to perform their hereditary functions within society. All levels of the religion are not accessible to all adherents; for example, members of the lower castes of society are not permitted to hear the recitation of the Vedas, to receive Vedic initiation, or to wear the initiate's sacred thread. However, all of the social and occupational duties of all the castes are seen as religiously ordained and intrinsically valuable. Members of even the lowest castes can improve their religious merit and future rebirths by fulfilling conscientiously their role in the divinely sanctioned caste system.

Hindus generally acknowledge the existence of a variety of gods, including some directly tied to the processes of the natural world, and preference for one does not require disbelief in any of the others. Most Hindus accept a kind of division of functions among the gods, with an underlying recognition that all are manifestations of a single whole. It was common in ancient India for Hindus to profess their primary allegiance to a specific deity, but never to the exclusion of others, for while one might be a worshipper of Viṣṇu in particular, other deities, such as Śiva and Gaṇeśa, would also be worshipped. The kings of ancient India most commonly were devotees of the god Śiva, who is the destroyer of the universe; Viṣṇu, who is the preserver of the universe; and, less commonly, other gods, such as Sūrya, the sun god. Royal devotion to these gods can be seen from the many religious dedications and temples patronized by Indic kings over the centuries. Worship of specific gods to bring success in various aspects of life, from adequate rainfall and success in battle to aversion of natural disasters, may have led to shifting allegiances toward one god or another. Hindu kings were often considered to be godlike or even to be incarnations of gods. In particular, Hindu kings were often compared with Viṣṇu, the preserver of the universe, for in their roles as protectors and providers for their citizens they fulfilled the mission of Viṣṇu himself on earth. Eloquent testimony to this idea from the Pāla period is found in the *Rāmacarita*, which identifies King Rāmapāla with the Rāma incarnation of Viṣṇu.

Numerous surviving images from the early Pāla period show a range of popular Hindu divinities, including depictions of Śiva, Viṣṇu and his incarnations, Sūrya, and



others. But by the late Pāla period, particularly in Bengal, Viṣṇu had emerged as the single most popular Hindu god, with Sūrya second in importance. Śaivism was still apparently strong, but not nearly as widespread as Vaiṣṇavism.

While there may have been important Hindu intellectual centers during the Pāla period, these remain largely unknown and unidentified. In contrast, the Buddhist centers are known primarily because information about them has survived in Tibetan, Chinese, and other non-Indic sources. In Hinduism, as in Buddhism, pilgrimage is an important form of religious practice, but the Hindu holy land encompasses all of ancient India (Bhāratavarṣa), and the holy places (*tīrthas*) are distributed throughout the subcontinent. Only one of the most sacred of the Hindu holy places of ancient Bhāratavarṣa was contained within the Pāla lands—Gayā, just a few miles north of Bodh Gayā. However, just as is true of Bodh Gayā, the place has been in such active worship over the centuries that it has not been excavated or studied systematically, although it promises to yield vital information about Pāla period Hinduism.<sup>85</sup> Thus, while Hindus actively engaged in pilgrimage activities, pilgrimage was probably not an important factor for the understanding of Pāla period Hindu culture. This, of course, contrasts greatly with the Buddhists, whose major network of sites was contained within the Pāla region.

Because one's position in Hindu society is based on birth and cannot be changed through external means, such as education or adoption of a new profession or means of livelihood, the Hindu social system was self-contained and did not easily accommodate converts who did not already occupy a place in their world. Thus, Hindus do not generally proselytize their religion and, unlike Buddhism, the religion did not spread to other areas of Asia through widespread conversion. Instead, Hinduism was transplanted to other regions primarily through the practice of importation and resettlement of *brāhmaṇas*. Such a practice occurred in Bengal after the Gupta period, leading to the eventual Hindu dominance in the region. Similarly, the religion spread to other areas, including some outside of South Asia, such as Indonesia and Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia). Probably mainly sought as a state religion by kings who wished to legitimize their rule and gain the emblematic powers associated with Hindu kingship, Hinduism was not a religion of the populace outside of India. The exceptions are Nepal, where, as part of the Indic cultural sphere from an early date, Hinduism had become a way of life long before the Pāla period, and Bali, where Hinduism continues to be practiced to the present day.

Hindu worship typically includes maintaining a household shrine and paying homage to the enshrined deity in various ways, such as praying and making offerings

of incense, flowers, and food. Group worship includes priestly rites for life-cycle transitions, such as puberty, marriage, and death, as well as temple rituals and the procession of images through the streets on special festival days. The offering of images to religious institutions may not have been as important to Hindus as it was to Buddhists; relatively few Pāla period Hindu images are inscribed with donative inscriptions. The building of temples was one of the prescribed duties of the king, and it is possible that patterns of artistic patronage were quite different for Hindus than for Buddhists. While important temple centers undoubtedly existed, for example at Gayā, the normal pattern of temple distribution was less concentrated than was apparently the case for Buddhists. Hindu temples probably were erected in most villages throughout the kingdom. Because of this dispersed pattern of temples, it is more difficult to locate artistic centers like those that flourished in the service of the Buddhist establishments.

### Jainism

Jain images are also represented in the artistic repertoire of the Pāla period, but as a tiny minority. This is somewhat surprising, since Magadha, the region that comprised the Buddhist holy land, was also sacred to the Jains; the last of their living exemplars, Mahāvīra, spent his life in the region at the same time that Śākyamuni Buddha was alive. It is puzzling that, given the sacredness of Magadha to the Jains, more Jain art was not produced there during the Pāla period. Unlike Buddhism, to which it is similar in a number of respects, Jainism did not attract foreign converts and did not send missionaries abroad. Thus, the absence of the international patronage enjoyed by the Buddhists may explain in part the reasons for the virtual absence of Jain art from the Pāla repertoire.

### ART OF THE PĀLA PERIOD

The surviving artifacts of any culture are unlikely to represent all that were produced or even those that were the most important or prevalent of their times. Survival and loss due to the sturdiness of the materials used in artistic production, climatic conditions, natural and manmade disasters, willful destruction, deliberate preservation, and even the circumstances of discovery or excavation account for what remains of any given culture or period. Coupled with the inevitable attrition of objects through deterioration and destruction is the fact that it is impossible to carry out complete archaeological excavations for any given phase of history, further limiting the amount of material remains that are available for study.

The art of South Asia has been subject to all these conditions and survives in examples that are not representative of all that originally was produced. For example, the art of the Candella dynasty, a royal line ruling in north-central India contemporaneously with the Pāla hegemony in the northeast, is known exclusively from surviving stone temples and forts and their sculptural decoration. However, the art of the Cōla dynasty, also ruling contemporaneously with the Pālas, but in the deep south of the subcontinent, is well documented by hundreds of architectural monuments, metal and stone images, mural paintings, and numerous other types of artifacts.

In the case of the Pāla period, although historical, artistic, and archaeological evidence indicates that many structures were built at Buddhist monastic and holy sites, at Hindu places of worship, and throughout the Pāla lands in general, virtually no architecture survives. However, there is an extensive corpus of extant sculptures in stone and metal and a few examples in other materials, such as wood, shell, and ivory. Manuscript paintings on palm leaf also have survived, but not in great numbers, and the recent discovery of murals at the great monastic site of Nālandā documents the production of wall paintings as well. In addition, terracotta objects, particularly seals, and a few miscellaneous objects in other media, such as wood, have survived. The vast majority of productions were probably made of ephemeral materials, such as wood and cloth, and consequently have been lost.

The known art of the Pāla period is without exception associated with religious contexts. As is true of the present state of knowledge about Indic culture in general, we can only conjecture about the nature and extent of secular artifacts and structures in residential and commercial centers.

## ARCHITECTURE

While kings and patrons in other regions of South Asia were creating stone temples in great numbers and were decorating the exteriors and interiors of these edifices with lavish sculptural programs that were part of the very fabric of the buildings, in Bihar and Bengal a very different pattern emerged. Although stone was accessible to artisans of the Pāla region, brick was apparently the preferred architectural medium. Instead of decorating these monuments with sculptures that were part of the structures themselves, separate images carved of stone were set into niches created for this purpose.

The practice of building with brick was very ancient in South Asia and preceded the use of stone. In some parts of the subcontinent, stone was reserved only for monuments of a sepulchral nature until a fairly late date,<sup>86</sup> when it began to replace brick as a popular medium. The

fact that brick continued to be important in the post-Pāla period art of Bengal suggests the strength of the preference for brick in the region.<sup>87</sup> Although the reasons for its persistence are unknown, they are likely to include aesthetic preference, availability (particularly in the river delta lands of Bengal), and the inexpensiveness of the material.

Although some sculptural embellishment must have been part of the fabric of the structures, particularly architectural moldings and bands of decorative motifs, the main sculptural program of the temples was carried by stone sculptures that were set into niches allocated for that purpose. Surviving models of Pāla period temples suggest what might have been the original appearance of some of these structures (cat. no. 41). The practice of carving stone images and placing them in niches is distinctive of the Pāla school. Many of the stone sculptures in this exhibition were used in such architectural settings. While surviving Pāla period stone images display considerable variation in size, from tiny miniatures to massive icons, certain size categories predominate. One of the most popular heights for Pāla period stone sculptures is about thirty inches, strongly suggesting that there may have been established niche sizes and that stone carvers created images of a predetermined size to be set into standardized receptacles.

In spite of the fact that not a single example of an intact temple survives from the Pāla period, the architectural idiom may partially be reconstructed from representations of buildings in paintings and sculpture and from some fragmentary and ruined structures. A few temple models (cat. no. 41) suggest what may have been popular architectural features of the period. The temples of the Pāla period belonged to the northern Indian style, called *nāgara* in ancient Indian architectural treatises. Apparently several different ground plans were used. For example, it is likely that a stepped-pyramid temple type existed, such as the cruciform temple at Pāhārpur and the temple at Antichak. The prevalence of this form in Southeast Asia is sometimes related to Pāla prototypes; however, the Pāla builders clearly were not the originators of the type, although their use of the plan may be important in tracing its transmission to Southeast Asia. It is likely that a simple format consisting of a main shrine chamber topped by a northern-style tower (*śikhara*) was a major architectural type (cat. no. 41). Perhaps preceded by an antechamber, each temple would have housed an image of the principal deity of the monument and may have held other images as well.

*Stūpas* had been an important architectural type since the earliest phase of Buddhism. However, there are no surviving architectural examples from the Pāla period, but there are many votive examples made of stone or a few of metal (cat. no. 50). Other architectural forms included the monastic dwellings at Buddhist monasteries, which, like the establishments themselves, are known as *vihāras*.

Their characteristic quadrangular plan, with small monastic cells surrounding a central courtyard and a covered veranda around the courtyard, had been used for community-dwelling monks and nuns since the earliest known monasteries, although the plan became more regularized and symmetrical over the centuries. The monasteries must have been beautifully constructed and maintained. A seventh-century account of the monastic buildings at Nālandā suggests the quality of their construction, decoration, and maintenance: "It is beyond one's power to describe the workmanship. . . . The shape of (each) saṅghārāma is square. . . . All the walls are skilfully and marvellously carved. . . . The floors and the caves are mosaic, made of bricks large and small—some as small as dates or peaches. They are plastered with a paste which is a mixture of finely powdered lime, earth, jute-fibres, oil and jute fluff. . . . When dry this paste is polished with soapstone and brushed over with a vermilion colour. Finally it is rubbed and polished with oil, and when spread, it gives to the brickwork the look of a mirror. The stairs also are polished (like this) and no crack appears in ten to twenty years' time. Right in the foreground are the Buddha-images before which valuable lustrous ornaments of gold are laid."<sup>88</sup>

## STONE SCULPTURE

Stone sculptures represent a majority of the artistic remains of the Pāla period. Thousands of examples survive, providing a detailed overview of the major stylistic developments and iconographic range of the period. In contrast, so few sculptures are known from some other periods of Indic art, such as the Maurya period, that it must be assumed that the few extant pieces give only a glimpse of the original range of art forms. At present, there are seventy-eight known dated sculptures,<sup>89</sup> including both stone and metal images, from the pre-Pāla and Pāla domain, which provide the framework for establishing the chronological and stylistic developments of the artistic tradition. In addition, since so many of the sculptures have been found at identifiably important sites, such as Nālandā, Bodh Gayā, and Vikramapura (Dhaka District), and at known locations throughout the region, it has been possible to determine what must have been some of the regional subschools within the Pāla idiom.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, objects that do not have a known provenance or date, like most in this exhibition, can be located within this framework with a fair degree of certainty regarding their probable place and date of manufacture.

Stone sculptures have a characteristic slab or stele format, with flat backs that reflect their usual placement in niches as part of the iconographic programs of the brick temples once prevalent in the Pāla territories. In the earlier

phase of the artistic development, through about the tenth century, the stelae have rounded tops (cat. no. 9), but in the later phase, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, they taper to a point (cat. no. 28). The stele slab is often decorated so that it serves as an aura (*prabhāmaṇḍala*, literally, "circle of radiance"), usually a full-body halo, for the central image (cat. no. 9). A few images do not have the stele format, though when placed as an object of worship on an altar or in another context, these may have been surrounded by carved and painted designs that formed a *prabhāmaṇḍala* or otherwise completed the effect of the image. The pedestal portion of the stele is normally thickest, and from a profile view the pieces taper slightly toward the top, obviously to create stability as they rested in their niches. A few surviving examples indicate that sculptures were sometimes grouped to display complex iconographic programs, but since no Pāla period temple or *stūpa* has survived intact with its original sculptures in place, it is impossible at this time to determine details about the programs that might have existed. One can speculate that some might have shown events in the life of the Buddha as a series or other grouped images in accordance with various iconographic sets.

Without exception, every known example of Pāla period stone sculpture was intended to be viewed from the front, with the devotee confronting the object while facing it directly. Sometimes, the central figure of the image may not stand frontally, but the stele itself is frontally conceived. This suggests that even as worshippers walked around temples when performing the ritual of circumambulation they would stop and turn to look at images by directly facing them. Even images that are carved in the round, such as those intended to be used on altars, are meant to be viewed from the front. This characteristic is nearly ubiquitous in the Indic tradition of image making. As a corollary to the frontal viewing position of the images, pictorial devices, such as perspective or adjustments to accommodate variable viewing positions, are notably absent from the works of art. This is true regardless of whether images were intended to be viewed at eye level or above.

Stele formats were highly conventionalized, although a number of different patterns may be identified and there are exceptions to these schemes. Commonly, stone images are divided into two zones, the pedestal portion and the main pictorial space, which always includes a central figure who is the focus of devotion and any attendant figures or accompanying elements. The division of the pictorial space into pedestal and main compartments was not merely a compositional convention, but one that had religious and symbolic meaning. The pedestal represents the mundane realm, where depictions of donors, monks, nuns, or other humans who dwell in the physical world occur. Above is the transcendent realm, as may be seen by



the nearly ubiquitous use of the lotus pedestal upon which the central figure sits or stands. If more than one figure is shown in a relief, the central image is invariably the largest, even compared with others occupying the same space. Human figures on the pedestal portion below the lotus pedestal are invariably tiny compared with the main figure, in keeping with the practice of hierarchic scaling to demonstrate their relative spiritual stature.

Pedestals are commonly designed in what is known as the *ratha* convention, a system of offsetting that is also used for wall treatment in architecture. In earlier images, this may consist of a single, baylike projection that carries the lotus pedestal of the central image (cat. no. 11), creating what would be a *triratha* (three-*ratha*) format. The number three is obtained by counting the two sections flanking the bay plus the outer surface of the bay itself. Earlier images have fewer *ratha* divisions, while later images generally have more, reflecting the trend of increasing complexity that is visible in Pāla period art. By the late Pāla period, it is not surprising to find image pedestals with five, seven (cat. no. 36), or even nine divisions.

With the exception of a handful of images made in other types of stone, the vast preponderance of Pāla period stone sculptures are fabricated of a greyish to grey black densely grained stone. Various called chlorite, basalt, and schist by early authors, the stone—probably most correctly identified as types of both schist and phyllite—previously was said to come from two quarries in the eastern Gangetic region: a greyish stone is allegedly found locally in the Gayā region of Bihar, and a darker, closer grained stone is reputed to be found in the Rajmahal Hills further east in Bihar near the Bengal border. However, these presuppositions recently have been called into question, and there has been considerable discussion about the classification of the stone types as well as probable quarry sites.<sup>91</sup> While these issues might seem irrelevant to the study of art, the identification of quarry sites and stone types can provide important historical information, particularly concerning trade patterns and trade routes, and may shed light on whether the geographical area in which a stone was used coincided with political, stylistic, or other boundaries.<sup>92</sup> Such information could be vital in further understanding the schools and subschools of Pāla art and the dynamics of art production.

Because stone varies in color and finish, differences visible to the naked eye may not correspond to geological considerations. Therefore, it has not been possible to provide specific attributions of stone types for the images in this exhibition, except the few that have been tested scientifically. A carving that is finished to a bright polish looks blacker than one that never had such a finish or lost its sheen through abrasion over the centuries. Descriptions of stone type and stone color should, therefore, not be considered definitive.

Apparently, stone from the Rajmahal Hills, a basalt, was not used for eastern Indian sculptures; instead, stone may have come from the southern flank of the Dalma Hills in Singhbhum District, where there are extensive occurrences of chloritoid phyllite,<sup>93</sup> or from Monghyr District just south of the Ganges River.<sup>94</sup>

The two types of stone now known to have been used most commonly by artists of the eastern regions, schist and phyllite, are essentially phases of the same material. The schists are somewhat coarser grained than the phyllite and are generally lighter in color. Interestingly, the earlier pieces, of the ninth through eleventh centuries, were usually carved in the coarser-grained schist, while phyllite has been identified only in later objects of the late tenth through twelfth centuries.<sup>95</sup> This change parallels a shift in artistic centers from Bihar to Bengal in later times and suggests the use of a different quarry. The phyllite of the later images is very fine-grained and facilitated the intricate carving and high polish so characteristic of the later images, sometimes achieving an almost metallic appearance.

## METAL SCULPTURE

The Magadha region was an abundant source of ore deposits since early times in India. Although no metal coins relating to the Pāla dynasty have been found, metal was apparently in widespread use for other purposes. Alloys in which copper was the principal component, such as bronze and brass, were commonly used for sculptures, as may be determined from surviving examples. More rarely, gold and silver were employed. Images of various metals were often gilded through a process of fire gilding, giving them a golden appearance regardless of the metal composition beneath the surface.

Textual sources indicate that an alloy made of eight component metals was to be used in the creation of metal images. Known as *aṣṭadhātu*, the alloy was to consist of copper, tin, lead, antimony, zinc, iron, gold, and silver. In actual practice, however, very few images seem to conform to this specification. Scientific analysis of a number of Pāla period metal pieces indicates that alloys varied greatly, as may be determined even visually by the different colors of metal images from the different workshops of Pāla art.<sup>96</sup> Many of the ores used in the metal-casting tradition were available in the eastern region, and others could be obtained through trade within the Indian subcontinent. Silver apparently was not mined in ancient India, but may have been imported from Southeast Asia.<sup>97</sup>

Small metal images were usually solid cast in a single piece. Larger images were generally hollow and often had separately cast parts—most commonly the halo, an umbrella canopy to be placed above the head of the

deity, and sometimes attendant figures. Sometimes pedestals and figures were cast separately (cat. no. 49). At their best, casting techniques were highly refined and produced unequivocal masterpieces on a par with any produced in the world; however, many images probably reflect the more limited purses of the average lay devotee. Most of the sculptural details were achieved through casting, with very little incising or chasing done after the pieces had been cast.

A popular technique perfected by Pāla metal craftsmen was the use of different colors of metal inlay to enhance a work. Pieces made of bronze or brass might have silver and copper detailing; for example, the lips of a figure might be inlaid with copper to provide a reddish color, while the eyes might be inlaid with silver, then drilled, to convey the sense of the white of the eye and the pupil and iris. This technique was popular at Kurkihār in Magadha, where some of the most magnificent of the Pāla period metal images have been discovered.

The backs of Pāla metal images are generally carefully finished; this characteristic is helpful for distinguishing between authentic Pāla examples and versions of the style made elsewhere. In contrast, the backs of Tibetan images are often crudely finished and may display a number of casting flaws, while representations from Java may show even greater detail and completion of the backs than their Pāla ancestors, or, alternatively, have a slablike finish.

Unlike stone sculptures, which were often used in exterior architectural embellishment, metal images were probably always intended to have been enshrined or placed on altars as objects of devotion, meditation, and visualization. Some must have been parts of sets that displayed complex iconographic programs, including the diagrammatic arrangement of deities known as a *maṇḍala*.

Metal images generally conform to highly conventionalized patterns similar to those found on stone images. Some of the main similarities to the format of stone images are that the pedestals are commonly used as a major element in compositions, the halo may be treated in a shape similar to that of the backslab in stone carvings, compositions always include a central figure and any accompanying elements and attendants, the images are conceived in a frontal manner, and hierarchic scaling is almost ubiquitously used.

Metal images display a great variety of sizes, but surviving metal images are generally fifteen inches in height or less, with most being smaller. The largest known metal image from the eastern regions is the over-life size representation of a standing Buddha of the pre-Pāla period that was found in a ruined Buddhist monastery at Sultāngañj, Bhagalpur District, Bihar (ancient Aṅga region).<sup>98</sup> Several of the images from Kurkihār are also quite large.

Although hundreds of metal images of the Pāla

period have survived, corrosion of the metal through centuries of burial in the archaeological mounds of South Asia has undoubtedly caused the loss of many others. Destruction presumably also occurred over the centuries as images no longer in worship were melted down so that the metal could be reused for other artistic, practical, or even military purposes.

It is likely that metal images were highly instrumental in the transmission of the Pāla style abroad. Much more easily transportable than the vast majority of stone pieces, numerous portable metal sculptures must have found their way to other regions of Asia with monks, travellers, and lay devotees travelling from India to these other places. Numerous examples believed to have been transported to Tibet during Pāla times have been brought out of Tibet recently; photographs of others installed on the altars of Tibetan monasteries further indicate that many had been transported there.<sup>99</sup> As documents of the authentic style of Indian Buddhism, such examples undoubtedly inspired their Tibetan descendants.

#### SCHOOLS OF PĀLA SCULPTURE: CHRONOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT, AND STYLISTIC VARIATIONS

Because of the survival of such a large corpus of inscribed, dated sculptures from the Pāla period, it has been possible to establish the chronological developments of the school on a sound basis.<sup>100</sup> Much of Pāla art is highly conventionalized, and therefore the treatment of specific features of undated sculptures may be studied in relation to those of the dated images in order to locate them within and further define the stylistic trends.

Very little is known about the artistic traditions of Bihar and Bengal prior to the Pāla period, and it has been difficult to determine all of the major trends because of the paucity of extant examples.<sup>101</sup> It is likely that many works of art of the pre-Pāla period were made of wood, stucco, and other fragile or ephemeral materials. But it is also likely that the unstable political situation of the pre-Pāla period did not enable artistic patronage to flourish as it later did during Pāla times.

The stone sculptures of the pre-Pāla period display indebtedness to several artistic schools. Most prominent is the style that developed at Sārnāth during the Gupta period, which may be seen primarily in Buddhist images of the sixth and seventh centuries from Bihar and Bengal. A standing Buddha image of the late fifth century that obviously had been made at Sārnāth but was discovered at Bihārail in Rajshahi District, Bangladesh, documents one probable means of the spread of the Sārnāth style to the east, that is, through importation of objects for local use.<sup>102</sup> The strong flavor of the Sārnāth Gupta style may be seen in numerous images from the east, such as a standing

Buddha from Sultāngaṅj, Bihar, of about the sixth or seventh century (cat. no. 1). The slightly flexed posture of the Buddha, with his hip thrust to his right, clinging garment, and gentle facial expression are all closely modeled after Gupta period prototypes from Sārnāth. However, the image is carved of the grey black stone local to the eastern region rather than the characteristic beige sandstone of Sārnāth imagery, and the body of the Buddha is more stocky in proportion than Sārnāth types, therefore clearly indicating that it was a product of a pre-Pāla school in the east.

Other stylistic sources for pre-Pāla art may be seen in a representation of Śiva and Pārvatī that is also probably from Bihar (cat. no. 2). In contrast to the more elegant forms of the Sārnāth-derived style, the figures in this composition display a heavier body type and a somewhat cruder carving technique. Used almost exclusively for Hindu rather than Buddhist images, this style apparently originated in central India, rather than Sārnāth. It is likely that during the pre-Pāla phase, before the Pāla ateliers of craftsmen were well established, artists producing Buddhist works and those creating Hindu pieces reflected different traditions.<sup>103</sup>

By the early Pāla period, artistic workshops apparently had become fairly widespread throughout the eastern regions, and a more cohesive regional style had begun to develop. By the reign of King Devapāla in the first half of the ninth century, the eastern style had numerous distinctive features and was manifested at a variety of art-producing sites. An image of Tārā in the exhibition was probably made in a Bihar workshop, perhaps even one at Nālandā, around the ninth century (cat. no. 7). By this date, it is difficult to discern the stylistic origins of the style, for the image may not easily be compared with earlier examples from Sārnāth or other schools; the Pāla idiom was now thoroughly established. The crisp carving of the facial features indicates the quality of the work, while the lively posture of the goddess, with her hip thrust to the side, displays the vitality of the early Pāla conceptions. Characteristics of the early Pāla style include a greater elaboration of detail than seen in pre-Pāla works, including detailing of Tārā's clothing and jewelry and the inclusion of her attendants. The backslab plays a dominant role in the visual effect of the piece, accented by the carving of a twisted, beaded garland around the rim. In contrast, the Buddha sculpture from Sultāngaṅj has a simple beaded rim, and the backslab of the representation of Śiva and Pārvatī is unadorned. The rounded shape of the stele in all these carvings is characteristic of pre-Pāla and early Pāla period imagery. The inclusion of a pair of *vidyādhara*s (bearers of wisdom) at the top of the stele becomes part of the standard configuration of Pāla period sculpture and is seen almost ubiquitously in both Buddhist and Hindu sculptures of the period. Usually depicted as

if flying above the heads of deities, *vidyādhara*s carry garlands symbolizing religious attainment, as if to proffer them to the central figure of the composition. Although the pedestal is not formally divided into *ratha* projections, it is divided into three sections, consisting of the central lotus pedestal portion, which projects forward, and two flanking receding sections. The simple division into only three sections is characteristic of the early Pāla style.

Another image probably from the Bihar region shows a Buddha displaying the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) and probably dates from the late ninth or tenth century (cat. no. 13). The two Buddhas flanking the central figure are highly reminiscent of the Buddha from Sultāngaṅj (cat. no. 1), and it is clear that they derive from the same artistic tradition, but these Buddhas have much fuller bodies, with greater attention paid by the sculptor to the bodily planes and surfaces. The overall configuration of the stele is very complicated, including the two attendant Buddhas, *vidyādhara*s, an elaborate throne and lotus pedestal, and a *bodhi* tree above the head of the central figure. There is hardly an unembellished surface in the entire sculpture, contrasting strongly with the simpler styles of the preceding centuries. While the stele still retains the rounded shape of the earlier images, there is a suggestion of a point near the top, anticipating the development of a pointed configuration in later Pāla period works.

A Hindu work of the tenth century from the Bengal region showing Śiva and Pārvatī also demonstrates this phase of Pāla period art (cat. no. 18). In sharp contrast to the pre-Pāla image of the same subject (cat. no. 2), this carving is highly elaborate, and every inch of the surface is embellished.

By the eleventh century, Pāla works invariably are elaborately ornamented and display a stunning array of iconographic elements within a single composition. An image of a Buddha in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*), possibly from northern Bengal and dating from the eleventh century, displays this richness (cat. no. 29). The stele top is now pointed and the pedestal is divided into nine sections.

Many of the images of the late Pāla period display a stiffness and restraint that contrasts with the livelier style of the pre-Pāla and early Pāla period. Some of this stiffness is due to the depiction of the central figure in late reliefs in a frontal, unflexed posture. This may be seen in a pristinely carved representation of a standing Buddha surrounded by scenes illustrating events of his life (cat. no. 14). However, the two standing Buddhas flanking the lower portion of the central figure stand in more relaxed postures, with their hips thrust toward the central image. These smaller Buddhas, with their smooth drapery and relaxed postures and the simple bead rims of their halos, are striking in their resemblance to the Buddha image from Sultāngaṅj, though



other features of this stele leave no doubt that the piece is much later. Polished to a brilliant sheen, the image, like many others from the late Pāla period, seems to be carved of a more densely grained stone than many of the earlier images. The stone was also suitable for the increased elaboration of details seen in the later works.

The overwhelming richness of the late Pāla style is seen in a representation of Vajra Tārā probably from Bihar (cat. no. 38), an image of Viṣṇu probably from Bengal (cat. no. 37), and a depiction of Śiva as a yogi probably from Bengal (cat. no. 39), all probably dating from around the late eleventh or twelfth century. The elaborately carved surfaces, detailed ornamentation, and pointed stele tops are all characteristic of the late style. The Śiva image shows another feature that often appears in late Pāla period works, namely, the reduction in size of the central figure in relation to the overall size of the stele. In contrast to the seated Buddha from the late ninth or tenth century (cat. no. 13), this figure seems small, while great emphasis is given to the stele slab. This feature, while perhaps somewhat exaggerated here, is nonetheless visible in many late Pāla period works. The Vajra Tārā is unusual for a late Pāla period work in that the central figure is not carved completely away from the backslab. In stone images of the eleventh and twelfth century, the backslab typically is pierced and the central figure is freed from the background. This feature is visible in the Śiva image and numerous other late Pāla period works, such as the Viṣṇu images discussed below (cat. nos. 36 and 37). The purpose of cutting through the backslab is unknown. However, it may have been related to a practice common today of clothing images with garments, jewelry, and garlands, for the detachment of the central figure from the surrounding elements would have facilitated the attachment of such adornments.

Metal images also evolved in a pattern parallel to that seen in stone sculpture, from simpler images to ones that are highly complex in both style and iconography over the course of the pre-Pāla and Pāla periods. The Gupta stylistic heritage is easily visible in a beautifully executed image of a standing Buddha from about the sixth century in the pre-Pāla period (cat. no. 42). The clinging garment of the Gupta style, the standing posture with one hip slightly thrust to the side, the facial features, and the hair style are all representative of the Gupta mode. The striated folds of the Buddha's garment, while not characteristic of the Sārnāth style, is derived from the Gupta idiom as seen, for example, at Mathurā. This image probably was originally set into a lotus base and must have been surrounded by a *prabhāmaṇḍala*. The loss of these elements makes it difficult to derive other information about the school and date of the image.

An approximately eleventh-century representation of another standing Buddha displays the changes that

took place in the style during the course of the Pāla period (cat. no. 47). The Buddha is now rigidly posed in an unflexed posture. His garment, while still clinging and reminiscent of the Gupta style, is now enriched by detailing of pleats at the hem, a feature found in other Pāla metal images of this date. The lotus pedestal, with its double-outlined forms and pointed leaves, is typical for eleventh-century images. Like the previous image, this sculpture probably originally had a *prabhāmaṇḍala*.

Many metal images, like the two just discussed, had detachable *prabhāmaṇḍalas*, which has resulted in their loss over the centuries. Since the *prabhāmaṇḍalas* often displayed many of the details that help determine stylistic developments, such as embellishment of the rim, shape of the *prabhāmaṇḍala*, and supplementary elements such as *vidyādhara*s, this loss is regrettable. However, a completely intact representation of Viṣṇu from about the twelfth century displays all the richness of late Pāla metal imagery (cat. no. 48). The central figure of the god is rigidly posed, the pedestal is divided into a complex *ratha* pattern, and the *prabhāmaṇḍala* is richly ornamented along the edge with a stylized motif that represents rays of light. The pointed shape of the *prabhāmaṇḍala* is highly accentuated and carries a *kīrttimukha*, an animal mask that is intended to drive away evil and protect the devout. Like *vidyādhara*s, such masks are a standard feature of Pāla period imagery, invariably occurring at the top of the backslab or *prabhāmaṇḍala*.

An understanding of the chronological developments of Pāla period sculpture alone is insufficient to explain the richness and complexity of the Pāla artistic developments. Varieties among surviving sculptures indicate that many different workshops of artisans flourished simultaneously in different parts of the Pāla kingdom, giving rise to subschools of the Pāla idiom. In the broadest division, the sculpture of the Pāla period may be separated into the Bihar and Bengal schools. While related, the histories of the artistic developments in these two regions, like the histories of the regions themselves, differ. Within Bihar and within Bengal, many subschools are discernible. Some, like those that served major religious institutions at sites like Nālandā and Bodh Gayā, flourished throughout the Pāla period. Others were apparently more shortlived. In Bihar, where major monastic institutions must have supported settled workshops of artists, stylistic distinctions by site and localities are fairly easy to observe. Major workshops, like those at Nālandā, must have influenced smaller ateliers nearby, as may be determined by the similarities among images produced within districts. However, the findspots of images in Bengal are more broadly distributed within the various regions of Bengal, such as Varendra (north Bengal), making it more difficult to identify centers of artistic production. It is possible that in Bengal artisans were itinerant workers who moved

from place to place as temples were built or that a few major centers distributed images throughout a region.

In Bihar, the Magadhan ateliers produced the vast majority of Pāla period art. Broadly speaking, the Magadhan style may be divided into two regional variants: the northern Magadhan idiom visible at sites in what was formerly Patna District but is now Nalanda District, and the southern Magadhan style, found at sites in the former Gaya District, which has been divided into Gaya and Nawada districts.<sup>104</sup> As far as is presently known from archaeological remains, Nālandā was the most prominent site in the northern Magadhan sphere, and many sites in its vicinity betray its influence on their artistic styles. Other monasteries nearby, such as Uddanāpura, which has not been studied, may also have had influential workshops, but it is likely that the works of art shared much with Nālandā and others in northern Magadha. In southern Magadha, several sites are important, including Bodh Gayā and Kurkihār. Images from southern Magadha also share many stylistic features that distinguish them from their counterparts further north.<sup>105</sup>

Several images in this exhibition display characteristics of the northern Magadhan style that was manifested at Nālandā and some associated sites, including the ninth-century image of Tārā just discussed (cat. no. 7), a depiction of Prajñāpāramitā (cat. no. 8), a representation of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni triumphing over Māra (cat. no. 13), and an image of a crowned Buddha (cat. no. 15). These may be contrasted with a number of images that are more likely to be from southern Magadha, including a representation of Queen Māyā giving birth to the Buddha-to-be (cat. no. 11), an image of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni triumphing over Māra (cat. no. 16), and an image of Tārā (cat. no. 17). Leaving aside the question of the date of the images, for sculptures of both the ninth and tenth centuries are included in this group, it is possible to observe several distinctive aesthetic differences between the two styles.

On the whole, the northern Magadhan works are characterized by a crisper carving technique and by greater three-dimensionality in the rendition of details. A comparison between the northern Magadhan style Tārā (cat. no. 7) and the southern Magadhan example (cat. no. 17) demonstrates these differences quite eloquently: The facial features of the northern Magadhan image are very crisp and pointed and turn upward, giving the face a sense of upward movement. The shape of the face is a narrow oval. In contrast, the southern Magadhan example has a round, flat face, and the features are carved to give a horizontal rather than lifted appearance. A common difference between the southern and northern Magadhan styles may also be noted in the treatment of the headdresses, for the Tārā from the southern region wears a tiara that has a straight headband, while the northern Magadhan Tārā wears a headdress that is curved and dips in the middle.

A comparison between two Buddha images, one from northern Magadha (cat. no. 15) and one from southern Magadha (cat. no. 16), also reveals differences between the northern and southern Magadhan idioms. For example, the treatment of the pedestals of the two images is quite distinct. The configuration seen in the southern Magadhan piece occurs commonly in images found at Kurkihār and related sites, but not in northern Magadhan examples. It is distinguished by the emphasis on the architectural elements, including the *candraśālā* (moon-chamber) motif that appears five times on the horizontal element of the throne just beneath the Buddha.

Distinctions among the styles of the Bengal region may be observed by comparing two representations of the god Viṣṇu. The iconographic similarity of the pieces, each showing a standing, frontal deity flanked by representations of his consorts, make them ideal for comparison. Both images are from the late Pāla period, around the twelfth century, though they were clearly products of different workshops and reflect different stylistic idioms. One piece (cat. no. 36) is likely to have been a product of a workshop in the vicinity of Dhaka in central Bengal (ancient Vaṅga), while the other was probably a product of an atelier in northern Bengal (ancient Varendra) (cat. no. 37). Striking differences between the two works may be noted in the shape and proportions of Viṣṇu's body; compared with the example from northern Bengal, the central Bengali figure is flatter and more highly schematized, the legs and torso are less naturalistically modeled, and the body displays a less vigorous build. The richly ornamented, deeply carved foliated elements on the backslab surrounding the head of the central figure in the northern Bengali image contrasts with the much less embellished forms on the other image.

Differences among the schools of metal sculpture are also visible in the artistic remains of the period, though unfortunately it has not been possible to assemble a full array of the styles for this exhibition. Further, because metal images have generally been found in hoards rather than distributed more evenly throughout the Pāla domain, it is not possible to reconstruct as full a picture of the regional idioms. However, an image of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī that is clearly of the Nālandā school (cat. no. 44) and a depiction of the god Viṣṇu and his consorts probably from southeastern Bengal (cat. no. 46) may be compared. The image of Mañjuśrī is firmly datable to the ninth century based on comparison with numerous examples from Nālandā, including several inscribed, dated images, while the Viṣṇu image is probably slightly later, perhaps late ninth or early tenth century. Yet the two images are astonishingly dissimilar. The southeastern Bengali image is strikingly simple, while the Nālandā image is more ornate in spite of the fact that the Bengali piece is later. Numerous sculptures found in southeastern Bengal at

of murals, such as those at Ajaṇṭā dating from around the fifth century, survive to suggest the techniques, forms, and evolution of the idiom. Paintings unrelated to architectural contexts, such as those on wood, tree bark, cloth, and leaves, apparently were produced regularly throughout ancient India's lengthy history. But these, too, have vanished almost without a trace.

Literary and artistic evidence indicates that there were at least three major types of Pāla period paintings: murals, paintings on cloth, and manuscripts on palm leaf. Surviving examples of Pāla painting represent only a miniscule fraction of the corpus once produced. Fortunately, knowledge about Pāla period painting may be augmented by studying the artistic traditions of Nepal and Tibet, which are highly derivative of the Pāla style, and from some examples surviving in Myanmar (Burma). Closely based upon Pāla models, these examples allow us to reconstruct many aspects of Pāla painting. It may be presumed that Pāla-derived paintings were also produced in other countries influenced by the Pāla model, such as Indonesia and Thailand. However, examples from these regions apparently have not survived to modern times. Pāla influence on Chinese painting, like that on sculpture, may be traced primarily through Tibetan and Nepali intermediaries, but the Chinese descendants are often too remote from the original Pāla exemplars to provide reliable information about the Pāla idiom.

Pāla mural painting is known at the present time from only one example, namely, some very fragmentary and damaged paintings recently discovered at Nālandā monastery.<sup>109</sup> The murals in the Lha khang So ma at Alchi in the Ladakh region of Kashmir are also executed in the Pāla style, but were probably created by local artists following Pāla period originals and not by Pāla artists per se.<sup>110</sup> Wall paintings at Iwang in Tibet are in the Pāla style as well,<sup>111</sup> but it is unknown whether Indian artists travelled to Tibet to execute them or whether Tibetan artists created them using Pāla paintings as models.

The Nālandā murals originally decorated the walls and plinth for an image at the so-called Sarai Mound. A fourteen-line inscription written in characters of the sixth or seventh century on a stone plaque embedded in the fabric of the Sarai Mound temple suggests that the rectangular structure was built in the pre-Pāla period; however, based on the style of the paintings, it may be suggested that they were not part of the original decoration of the building but represented a refurbishment that occurred during the Pāla period. Very badly damaged, these paintings are rare documents of what must have been a major art form of the Pāla period; one can only imagine what paintings once covered the walls of most temples and shrines. The complete interiors of these buildings must have been painted, including not just the walls but the three-dimensional surfaces as well, including

the permanently installed images. The practice of creating a completely polychromed interior, with paintings continuing from the walls onto the images in a unified fashion, is well known in the Indic context. It occurs at the gSum brtsegs at Alchi in Ladakh<sup>112</sup> and at Ajaṇṭā, as in the shrine at the rear of Cave 2, where the paintings on the wall and the sculptures are unified into a single artistic conception.

In style, the Nālandā murals correspond to the paintings found in manuscripts of the Pāla period. It is notable that the mural paintings are not particularly more detailed than are the miniature paintings in the palm leaf manuscripts of the period. A similar phenomenon occurs in Ladakh, for example, at the gSum brtsegs, where small images of the type found in manuscripts are transferred to the wall-painting idiom.<sup>113</sup>

Though no single unequivocally identified example is known today, it is certain that paintings on cloth, probably the forerunners of the Nepali *paṭa* and Tibetan *thang ka* formats, were also produced during the Pāla period. A few paintings have recently attracted attention as being possible examples of Pāla period paintings on cloth; however, none has been verified as being of Pāla manufacture rather than Pāla-derived. Yet it is not unforeseeable that actual Pāla period paintings on cloth might be discovered some day.

The tradition of painting on cloth was apparently prevalent from early times in ancient India. Generally called *paṭa* (woven cloth or painted cloth, i.e., a picture), *paṭagata* ("on cloth," i.e., a painting), or *paṭacitra* (cloth picture), cloth paintings apparently were used in several ways. Some were displayed on walls, others were carried as banners in processions, and some apparently were employed in conjunction with a storytelling idiom in which texts were recited while appropriate banners were displayed. The seventh-century Indian author Bāṇa describes such a picture in his narrative on King Harṣa, the *Harṣacarita* (*Deeds of Harṣa*).<sup>114</sup> He mentions a popular storyteller who in the marketplace and other public streets displayed a *yama paṭa*, that is, a piece of cloth on which was depicted Yama, the god of death, and the tortures of hell. While describing the scenes, he displayed the picture in his left hand, while pointing with his right hand to features of the painting to emphasize elements in his narration. That such banners were prevalent in the reign of Harṣa, who claimed to be king of Magadha, is significant, since the Pālas were the inheritors of much of Harṣa's seventh-century empire and are likely to have fostered the continuation of earlier artistic traditions.

Sanskrit literature also indicates the importance of cloth paintings in ancient India. In the first act of the Sanskrit drama *Mudrārākṣasa*, for example, there is a description of how such paintings were shown. That cloth paintings were rolled for storage or when not in use is



suggested by the Sanskrit literary allusion known as the "simile of the painted canvas" (*citraṭaṇyāya*), which suggests that a canvas unrolled to reveal its contents is like the supreme divinity making manifest the whole world concealed in him.<sup>115</sup>

Specific documentation that a cloth-painting tradition flourished in the Pāla period comes from a twelfth-century Chinese author, who recorded that at Nālandā "there are made many paintings of Buddha, Bodhisattvas and Arhats, painted on Indian cloth. These Buddhist representations are greatly different from those of China. . . . First the five mystic syllables are written on the reverse of the painting, and thereafter the picture is drawn in full colours on the obverse. They cover the canvas with a ground of gold or vermilion. They aver that cow's glue is too thick (for mixing the colours), therefore they use peach resin glue diluted with water in which willow branches have been soaked, which makes the pigments durable and bright."<sup>116</sup>

It is unknown what kinds of mountings were used for paintings on cloth, but it is likely that they were similar to the simple blue cloth mountings found on the earliest surviving Nepali and Tibetan paintings (cat. no. 110). Ultimately, in Tibet and later in Nepal such borders were transformed with the aid of Chinese models into lavish and symbolically complex complements to the paintings, but it is likely that the earliest examples were largely practical and helped facilitate display of the paintings and preservation of their edges.

The most well known paintings of the Pāla period are those that occur as illustrations in palm leaf manuscripts, called *pustaka*, such as those included in this exhibition (cat. nos. 57-60). As a symbol of knowledge, a *pustaka* often appears in art as an attribute carried by a deity who represents wisdom or supreme knowledge, most notably Prajñāpāramitā (cat. no. 8) and Mañjuśrī (cat. no. 25).

While it has been speculated that paper may have been used for manuscripts at an early date in India, only examples on palm leaf have survived. However, two twelfth-century Nepali manuscripts on paper are known, suggesting that paper may have been used in eastern India as well, since the painting traditions of the two regions were so closely related.<sup>117</sup> Paper was made of plant materials native to the Himalayas, and therefore the raw materials were not widely available throughout India. Therefore, if paper was used at all in the Pāla lands, its use was probably limited in scope.

The practice of copying manuscripts has an ancient history in India, though the precise date of the inception of the tradition is unknown. The importance of such manuscripts to the reconstruction of Pāla period culture and history has already been discussed. In ancient India, great emphasis was placed on the spoken word, and religious texts were memorized and recited orally. While the preeminence of the spoken word has been retained in

Hinduism to a large extent, in Buddhism at an apparently early date the emphasis shifted from that of a primarily oral tradition to one that favored the written word. Learned monks who had mastered the memorization of religious texts, called *bhāṇakas* (reciters of texts), came to be outnumbered by scribes, who copied the texts and produced manuscripts in great numbers. Monasteries began to amass large collections of texts, and libraries became standard elements of the monastic compound. Nālandā's libraries have been described as huge, multistoried structures located in an area of the compound called Dharmagañja; the names of three of these libraries are recorded: Ratnodadhi (Sea of Jewels), Ratnasāgara (Ocean of Jewels), and Ratnarañjaka (Jewel-adorned).<sup>118</sup>

As the Buddhist religion spread to other regions of Asia, emphasis on manuscripts was very strong, and many foreign missions to India had as their principal objective the collection of religious texts. Xuanzang is said to have taken 520 fasciculi comprising 657 distinct volumes carried upon twenty horses, while Yijing carried away approximately four hundred texts.<sup>119</sup> The *Blue Annals* records that a learned monk-scholar of Tibet who died in 1190 visited India and took away many man-loads of Indian books, many of which supposedly were preserved at Ngor monastery.<sup>120</sup> The importance of texts in Buddhism was so great that as Buddhism spread to cultures in which written language had not yet developed, writing also had to be introduced; thus, the Japanese adapted the Chinese writing system and the Tibetans were stimulated to develop their own alphabet based on the Kashmiri model. Manuscripts were collected into the canons of Buddhist literature in these and other Buddhist countries.

Therefore, the manuscripts and their paintings of the Pāla period do not represent a minor art, but reflect one of the most important aspects of Buddhism during the Pāla period, the textual tradition. Of the thousands of manuscripts that were once produced, it may be presumed that only a relatively small number of the Indian manuscripts were illustrated. Even among the surviving examples, most consist solely of written texts, with only a few including paintings.

The palm leaf used for the manuscripts of Bihar and Bengal comes from the talipot (*Corypha umbraculifera*), a tall, showy, fan-leaved palm tree that grows in Sri Lanka, the Malabar Coast of India, the Philippines, and Myanmar (Burma) and may have been prevalent in Bengal at one time. Sections of the fan-shaped leaves are cut away from the ribs, providing long, narrow strips between two and three inches in height and about a yard in length. The maximum height for a manuscript page is therefore about two or three inches, while the typical length of the Pāla page is between twenty and twenty-two inches. In preparation for use as a surface for writing or painting, the leaves are boiled, dried, and rubbed and ultimately yield

a light brown, smooth, flexible surface.<sup>121</sup> Over time, the leaves become brittle and fragile, as may be seen in examples surviving from the Pāla period.

The talipot manuscripts from northern India were apparently written with a reed pen or, alternatively, an iron stylus.<sup>122</sup> The individual leaves that comprised the completed manuscript were held together on a cord (*sūtra* or *nāḍī*) strung through holes that had been cut in the leaves prior to writing and decoration. Finally, the manuscript was placed between a pair of covers (*paṭa* or *paṭli*) slightly larger than the leaves in order to protect the edges. The covers were usually made of wood, as may be surmised from surviving examples (for a Nepali example, see cat. no. 90); however, it is likely that other materials, such as ivory or copper, might have been used as well. Covers were often decorated with painted or carved designs. For added protection, manuscripts may have been wrapped in cloth and stored in specially designed boxes. Immunity from insect damage was provided when the cloths were dyed with orpiment, a yellow pigment that contains arsenic.<sup>123</sup>

Although the pigments used in the manuscript paintings have not been identified, the artist's palette was normally limited to six colors: red, yellow, blue, green, black, and white. The selection of these colors was probably not based on aesthetic considerations alone, for by the Pāla period a highly elaborate system of color symbolism had developed. Although this aspect of Pāla period iconography cannot be understood from the surviving stone and metal images, color was a crucial component in the descriptions of the religious beings depicted in the art. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, for example, were categorized into specific families (*kulas*), each of which had its characteristic color. The six syllables of the Buddhist *mantra* OM MAṆI PADME HŪM are sometimes correlated to these six colors.<sup>124</sup> The colors used in the manuscripts are water soluble and are thick and opaque, forming a crust on the surface of the leaf that is not absorbed due to the properties of the leaf surface.

The relationship between the written text and the paintings in the manuscripts has puzzled scholars. In general, the pictures do not illustrate the texts themselves but represent iconographic themes of their own, which may nonetheless be connected with concepts in the texts. The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, which is the most common text in the corpus of extant Pāla palm leaf manuscripts, is generally accompanied by illustrations of the eight major life scenes of Śākyamuni Buddha, although the text itself is not concerned with the historical Buddha's biography. It is possible that, given the special emphasis placed on the Buddha life events and their associated *paribhogaka* places in Pāla period Buddhism, these depictions had a relevance of their own, perhaps even serving as a kind of surrogate, or meditational, pilgrimage.

The existence of manuscript illustrations that portray some of the famous images installed in sacred shrines within the Pāla territories<sup>125</sup> further suggests that a specific iconography associated with the region may have been incorporated into manuscript illustrations. However, there are likely to be other reasons that better explain the juxtaposition of the painted subjects and the texts.

The size of the painted compositions was limited by the dimensions of the palm leaves, which provided a maximum height of about three inches. Painted compositions apparently never occupied the entire length of a leaf, but rather were generally about three or four inches across. A common arrangement of these painted miniatures within a manuscript was three per leaf, with only a few leaves at the beginning, end, and middle of the manuscript being illustrated.<sup>126</sup>

Probably as a result of the miniature format of the paintings, their style is highly simplified and abbreviated, including only the most important iconographic elements. Compositions usually displayed single figures or major figures accompanied by smaller attendants. As in Pāla period sculptures, the figures tell the main story; other elements, such as thrones and architectural constructs, are present, but a complete environment is not rendered. The abbreviated compositions focus on the essential elements to be communicated. In general, the figures depicted in the paintings are more lively and animated than their sculptural counterparts, possibly reflecting differences inherent in the media and perhaps other factors, such as the iconic function of the sculptures.

Colors were rarely, if ever, mixed and, with the exception of the flesh tones of some of the darker figures, were generally applied in a flat manner, without modulation. Sometimes a two-tone arrangement of color was used to suggest light and shadow; for example, a red outline around a yellow figure suggests a glowing, shaded skin (cat. no. 59). Colors were applied in an opaque manner and were vibrant and intense; reds, blues, yellows, and greens were often of similar chroma and compete for the viewer's eye with equal vigor. The pictorial elements were usually outlined with black or another color. Techniques such as stippling occasionally were used in the application of color (cat. no. 57).

Considerable variation in style is apparent among the surviving palm leaf manuscript paintings, ranging from folkishly charming images (cat. no. 57) to highly sophisticated, skillfully drawn examples (cat. no. 59). It is likely that the majority of artists were professionals, although a few monk-artists may have also existed. The scribes, however, were probably mostly monks. Because so little is known about the artists who produced these illustrations and the artistic schools they represented, it cannot be determined whether variations in the paintings reflect the specific hand of the artists, the evolution of an

artist's style over time, local styles of one site or region, chronological developments within the Pāla period, or different levels of patronage. While the colophons of some manuscripts provide information about their place and date of creation, the paucity of examples inhibits our ability to interpret this information against the broader background of Pāla period art. Further, all of the known manuscripts date from the late Pāla period, around the eleventh and twelfth centuries, leaving us with little knowledge about the early Pāla developments.

Of the Pāla-based artistic traditions, Nepal has yielded the most closely related palm leaf paintings; there has been great disagreement among scholars, in fact, regarding the original provenance of a number of the palm leaf manuscripts. There is strong evidence that other Pāla-influenced regions used the palm leaf format, particularly where the talipot was easily available, such as Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Indonesia. Tibetan manuscripts apparently were executed on paper from an early date, perhaps because of the unavailability of palm leaf. Not limited by the natural size of the talipot leaves, the Tibetans modified the proportions of the page by increasing the width and enlarging the overall size of the manuscript leaf while retaining the long, narrow format of their Pāla models.

## ICONOGRAPHY

If art mirrors culture, then insight into a culture may be gleaned from an examination of its major artistic themes. Unfortunately, not a single iconographic program from the Pāla period survives intact other than those that appear on architectural models (cat. nos. 41 and 50), leaving only a fragmented portrait of the iconography of the period based largely on what are now isolated examples. However, based on the popularity of certain subjects, it is possible to determine the relative importance of various artistic themes and, through correlation with historical and religious information, to suggest their basic meanings.

The surviving art of the Pāla period is religious, meant to support meditation and visualization of the divine. In both Buddhism and Hinduism, the images resonate at many levels. Every element, every gesture, and in many cases every nuance is imbued with philosophical and methodological content. For lay practitioners, the complexities of the symbolism probably were not understood, but the images served for them as sources of instruction and inspiration.

In order to understand Pāla period art, it is necessary to separate the iconic form from discretionary detailing, backgrounds, and decorative elements provided by the artists. The appearance and attributes of the divinities reflected long-established iconographic models and

patterns that had been developing over the centuries. These prescribed iconographic patterns determined the posture, ornamentation, costume, and attending figures of a deity, while embellishment of the forms and the techniques used to create them were the province of the artists.

By the Pāla period, many of the iconic forms had been described in texts. For Buddhists, these included ritual and meditative practice manuals (*sādhana*s),<sup>127</sup> some of which were composed during the Pāla period; the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*,<sup>128</sup> an iconographic compendium written by Abhayākara Gupta of Vikramaśīla monastery, who lived during the reign of King Rāmapāla; and the *tantras*, the sacred texts of Tantric Buddhism, which may describe all aspects of these beings, such as their color, adornment, postures, *mudrās*, attributes, symbols, and invocations for worship. When searching for written confirmation of identification of visual images, it is important to remember that much of what was known and taught was not written but was transmitted orally from teacher to disciple and has remained in the esoteric oral domain or has been lost. For Hindus, a variety of texts that were codified by the Pāla period related the stories of the gods and their heroic deeds, including Purāṇas, Upaniṣads, Hindu *tantras*, and a number of explicitly iconographic texts.

In Buddhist and Hindu images alike the main figure stands in a conventionalized pose, usually either a standing posture (*sthānaka*) or a seated pose (*āsana*). Deliberate and symbolic hand gestures (*mudrā*) convey specific meanings that would have been familiar to devotees. The hands of a figure might also hold attributes symbolic of his or her nature; for example, Śiva characteristically holds a trident (*triśūla*), a symbolic weapon against evil, while Tārā holds a lotus (*padma*), symbolizing her compassion. Bodily proportions of divinities are often rendered according to idealized schemes, and their bodies may display auspicious or aesthetically preferred features. For example, males and females alike are often shown with three concentric lines at the neck (cat. nos. 1, 6, 9, and 42). Called *trivālī* or *kambugrīva* (shell-neck), these lines signify good fortune and beauty and are a metaphor for the three folds that occur at the opening of spiral shells, such as the conch. The torsos of male figures are often shaped to resemble a cow's face (*gomukha*) in another prevalent artistic metaphor of the Pāla period (cat. no. 40).

The central figure in a composition is often accompanied by attendants, including consorts, vehicles, and other members of the deity's retinue. These attendants are invariably much smaller in size than the main figure, indicating their lesser importance. The central figure and often the attendants normally stand or sit atop lotus pedestals, indicative of their transcendent nature. Additional standard elements in Pāla compositions include



*vidyādhara*s (bearers of wisdom), who are depicted as if flying above the heads of deities while proffering garlands (cat. no. 40), and a *kīrttimukha*, a kind of protective demon-mask often placed at the top center of sculpted icons (cat. no. 40). Together, these elements communicate the religious meaning of a work.

## BUDDHIST IMAGES

### Buddhas

Representations of Buddhas are easily recognizable and conform to limited parameters in terms of posture, hand gestures, garments, depictions of bodily marks, and other features. Not every representation of a Buddha is a depiction of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. However, depictions of Buddhas may be so similar that it is sometimes difficult to determine the identity of the Buddha in a specific image (cat. no. 1).

Buddhas can be recognized by the monks' garments that they wear, although there are a number of variant ways in which the robes may be worn. In Pāla period art, a Buddha may wear his upper garment so that it covers both shoulders (cat. no. 19) or so that it covers only the left shoulder. In some images (cat. nos. 13 and 14), the variation in the way the robe is worn apparently is associated with pre-enlightenment and post-enlightenment events of Śākyamuni's life.<sup>129</sup> As renunciants who have abandoned the material world, Buddhas do not normally wear jewelry except in the specific iconic convention of the crowned Buddha type (see below). Śākyamuni Buddha is said to have cut off his luxuriant hair shortly after he decided to pursue the religious path, and Buddhas are normally shown with shaven heads or with a closely cropped hair style. In the Pāla period, the hair style of Buddhas was standardized into rows of small curls that are considered to form clockwise spirals. A Buddha also has a number of bodily marks that indicate his transcendent nature. In the case of Śākyamuni Buddha, thirty-two of these special signs (*lakṣaṇa*) were present on his body at birth. In art, only a few of these are typically shown, including his *uṣṇīṣa* (a knot of hair, sometimes described as a bump, on the top of the head), *ūrṇā* (a mark in the center of his forehead), webbed fingers, and inscribed wheels (*cakra*) on the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands. His golden color is sometimes depicted in metal images through the practice of gilding (or in the fabrication of gold images), and it is possible that stone images were also colored to suggest his golden skin. These characteristics are not exclusive to Śākyamuni, but characterize all Buddhas in artistic renderings. Buddhas also have elongated earlobes, unadorned by earrings, which indicate their relinquishment of worldly goods. During his early

life as a prince, Śākyamuni wore heavy ear ornaments that stretched his lobes; as an ascetic no longer adorned with princely ornaments, his empty lobes, distended by years of wearing princely jewels, served as a reminder of the luxury he had abandoned for his spiritual quest.

Buddhas invariably display symbolic hand gestures (*mudrā*). Normally both hands are engaged in a deliberate activity, although the principal hand for communicating through gesture is always the right hand. Specific *mudrās* may help identify the event being depicted, as in the case of life scenes of Śākyamuni, or may identify which specific Buddha is being portrayed. Some Buddhas also carry objects in their hands that indicate the scene being depicted or the nature of the Buddha.

### Śākyamuni and His Major Life Events (*Aṣṭamahāprātihārya*)

Representations of Śākyamuni Buddha constitute the single most popular subject in Buddhist art of the Pāla period. It is sometimes impossible to determine which event in his life is being shown, and some images may not refer to a specific life event. However, the overwhelming majority of artistic renderings are depictions of recognizable events from his life, particularly the group of eight events known as the *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* (the eight great illusory displays) that took place at what became the major places of pilgrimage in the Buddhist homeland.<sup>130</sup> These events are his birth, Māravijaya (claiming his right to enlightenment), first teaching, the display of supernatural powers, descent from Trāyastriṃśa, taming of the elephant Nālāgiri, gift of honey, and death (*parinirvāṇa*). While it might be expected that images of Śākyamuni Buddha and major events of his life would constitute an important, if not major, theme of Buddhist art throughout its history, in fact, the depiction of this combination of events was not widespread in other traditions of Indic Buddhist art. The artistic traditions of other Buddhist centers contemporaneous with the Pāla tradition do not emphasize these events, nor do they appear regularly in the art of earlier periods, though precedents for this selection and grouping of life events may be found.<sup>131</sup> Instead, the popularization of this theme and its characteristic Pāla configurations are original to and distinctive of the Pāla period in the Buddhist art of South Asia.

This emphasis upon the life events in Pāla Buddhist art is inextricably linked to the fact that several of these events took place within the region of Magadha itself. The importance of the eight sites as *paribhogaka* places has already been discussed, and pilgrimage to them constituted a principal form of religious activity during the Pāla period. Representations of the eight places in art are, in effect, depictions of the Buddhist holy land itself and may

have served as a kind of visual pilgrimage route for meditation and visualization (*anusmṛti*) practices.

The *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* occur in art of the Pāla period in two ways. They may appear separately in images that depict a single scene (cat. no. 11), although such images may have been intended to be displayed in a group, or they may be combined into single compositions that contain all eight or fewer (cat. no. 15) of the scenes. The eight events commonly appear in painted manuscripts of the Pāla period, generally in the format of eight individual compositions, each of which depicts one event in the Buddha's life (cat. nos. 57-59).

Pāla period depictions of the eight events do not normally appear in narrative form. Instead, each event was schematized into a composition with several standard key elements. The standardized versions probably were based on earlier conventionalizations of the scenes in Buddhist art and may in that sense be images of images. In the most simplified and abbreviated versions of these events, the birth scene shows Queen Māyā, the Buddha's mother, grasping a branch of a *śāla* tree and the child emerging from her right side (cat. no. 11); the Māravijaya shows the Buddha-to-be seated under the *bodhi* tree and reaching down with his right hand in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) (cat. nos. 13, 16, and 29); the first teaching scene depicts the Buddha in a seated posture and displaying a teaching gesture (*dharmacakra mudrā*) with his hands (cat. no. 19); the display of supernatural powers is also depicted by a seated Buddha with the teaching gesture (cat. no. 14, top right, and cat. no. 58); the descent from Trāyastriṃśa is represented by a standing figure of the Buddha displaying the gift-giving gesture (*varada mudrā*) with his right hand (cat. no. 9); the taming of the elephant is indicated by a standing Buddha with his right hand raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*) or with his right hand downward and sometimes with lions issuing from it (cat. no. 58); the offering of the monkey is shown by a seated Buddha with his hands in a meditation gesture (*dhyāna mudrā*) and often holding a bowl (cat. no. 14, right center); and, finally, the death scene shows the Buddha reclining on his right side (cat. no. 57, right). Often, additional descriptive elements of the narratives occur as well. For example, the monkey who offers the gift of honey to the Buddha may be shown, as might the elephant Nālāgiri. A depiction of a pair of deer flanking the Buddhist wheel (*dharmacakra*) in front of the throne of the Buddha in the scene of the first teaching often distinguishes it from the otherwise similarly depicted display of supernatural powers. In the descent from Trāyastriṃśa, the Buddha may be flanked by the Brahmanical gods Indra (*Śakra*) and Brahmā, who accompanied him on his descent. The inclusion of other details may depend on the size, medium, and intricacy of an image. Some of the compositions are quite complex and

may show more than one moment of the event.<sup>132</sup>

The single most popular manner of depicting Śākyamuni Buddha during the Pāla period is in the Māravijaya scene, where he is seated in a posture known as *padmāsana* or *vajraparyāṅkāsa*, with his right hand reaching down in the earth-touching gesture (cat. nos. 13, 16, 29). This image type has been termed the Vajrāsana Buddha, for in these depictions he sits upon the Vajrāsana, the sacred spot beneath the *bodhi* tree where he attained enlightenment. The event occurred during the course of the meditations that led to his enlightenment. Although sometimes this subject is mistakenly identified as the enlightenment itself, it is technically a pre-enlightenment event. However, it is the decisive event that signaled the imminence of the enlightenment. The Māravijaya (victory over Māra) occurred when Māra, the archenemy of those who seek liberation, attempted with all his powers to deter the Buddha-to-be from attaining enlightenment. It is curious that the actual moment of enlightenment is not what is portrayed in the art, since the enlightenment was the summation of all Buddhist effort. This subject invites further consideration.

It is not difficult to imagine why Bodh Gayā and the Vajrāsana Buddha scene would become such prominent themes in any Buddhist artistic tradition. Religious texts indicate the importance of the place of enlightenment. The *Nidāna-kathā* describes Siddhārtha's efforts to select the proper spot under the *aśvattha* tree: "Now in the East is the place where all the Buddhas have sat crosslegged; and that place neither trembles nor shakes. . . . This [the eastern side under the tree] is the steadfast spot chosen by all the Buddhas."<sup>133</sup> The *Buddhacarita* explains that it was the only place where enlightenment could have occurred: "For this is the navel of the earth's surface, entirely possessed of the highest power; for there is no other spot on earth which can bear the force of his concentrated thought."<sup>134</sup> Yet, this image type did not become popular until the Pāla period, and it must be asserted that there are reasons for its popularity during the Pāla period. Sārnāth, the site of the first teaching, had been dominant during the Gupta period, and accordingly teaching Buddha images are widespread in Gupta art. It is likely that the shrinking of Buddhist territories outside of Magadha during the Pāla period led to the prominence of sites within Magadha, and of the sites in Magadha, Bodh Gayā was clearly the most important.

It may be suggested here that the site of Bodh Gayā and the image of Śākyamuni Buddha overcoming the forces of Māra had additional significance in the Pāla period. The only surviving royal records of the Pāla kings themselves, that is, the copperplate inscriptions, supply powerful documentation that the site of Bodh Gayā and the Vajrāsana Buddha became dynastic symbols of the Pāla reign. Whether it had the status of a palladium is

unknown.<sup>135</sup> The Khālimpur copperplate grant from the reign of King Dharmapāla, the second Pāla king and the first who is known through his own inscriptions, begins with an invocation to the Vajrāsana.<sup>136</sup> It has been suggested that this verse refers not only to the Buddha and his throne, but simultaneously to Dharmapāla and his throne.<sup>137</sup> Because Dharmapāla was a Buddhist (in contrast to his father, who apparently was a Vaiṣṇava), the sentiments expressed in the copperplate would seem to reflect his own sincere Buddhist piety.<sup>138</sup> In the two known copperplate inscriptions of the next king, Devapāla, the Monghyr plate and Nālandā plate, Devapāla's ascension to the throne is likened to the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment at Bodh Gayā.<sup>139</sup> The accompanying invocation to the Buddha appears to be original and not copied from the Khālimpur plate of his father, again suggesting the king's personal Buddhist devotion rather than a standard formula.<sup>140</sup>

The copperplate grants of the next two kings, Mahendrapāla and Śūrapāla, have not been translated, so it cannot be determined whether they followed a similar pattern.<sup>141</sup> However, an explicit association between a Pāla king and the Buddha's enlightenment at Bodh Gayā is first expressed powerfully during the reign of Nārāyaṇapāla in his Bhāgalpur grant. Nārāyaṇapāla's grant conflates the traditional invocation to the Buddha with the standard genealogical description of Gopāla by applying one set of adjectives to the two names.<sup>142</sup> The inscription draws parallels between the Buddha, who "removed the mire of ignorance" and "attained permanent bliss by repelling the aggression of Māra," and King Gopāla, the founder of the dynasty, who washed "the dirt of ignorance of his subjects" and established "permanent peace in the kingdom by removal of anarchy (a state caused by the actions of self-willed men)."<sup>143</sup> The technique of using double entendre, later employed to compare King Rāmapāla with Rāma in the *Rāmacarita*, is a well-known literary technique in ancient India.

The format of the Bhāgalpur grant became the absolute standard for Nārāyaṇapāla's heirs and successors and is repeated in every known copperplate grant of the subsequent Pāla kings.<sup>144</sup> The fact that these verses are repeated, whether or not the individual king is Buddhist,<sup>145</sup> indicates that the symbolism came to have dynastic rather than religious significance for the kings. (Nārāyaṇapāla himself seems to have been a Hindu.) That this grant set the standard for metaphors and language in all subsequent known copperplate grants indicates that the appearance of the verses does not reflect the religious proclivities of the reigning king.<sup>146</sup>

The dynamics of the Vajrāsana Buddha as both a religious and a political metaphor of the Pāla dynasty are probably highly complex. The symbol of the earth-touching Buddha may have been favored by the Pālas because of its

powerful connotations of legitimacy, invincibility, and territorial domain, as well as its overwhelming importance to the Buddhist practitioners of the Pāla kingdom. One can well imagine the many dynastic purposes that might have been served by the Pāla rulers' use of the symbol, such as sharing in its prestige, presenting themselves as protectors and supporters of Buddhism, proclaiming the location of the center (or "navel") of the earth within their realm and by extension their realm as the center of the earth, and expressing the intention that they would conquer their enemies and disruptive elements within their realm just as Śākyamuni triumphed over Māra. Regardless of the specifics of the intended symbolism, the employment of the metaphor as an emblem of their rule can leave no doubt about its importance to the economic, cultural, religious, and even political life of their kingdom. It is even possible that the adoption of this symbol by the Pālas stimulated its prominence in the artistic and religious culture of the Pāla period.

The importance of the Vajrāsana Buddha image in the Pāla tradition is evident from the fact that the subject appears very widely in the art of Pāla-dependent regions. Further, replicas of the sacred Mahābodhi Temple at the site of the enlightenment were created throughout Buddhist Asia.<sup>147</sup> Perhaps as surrogates of the site and its *paribhogaka* powers, such structures may have been created out of a desire to recreate the only place where enlightenment could occur. Furthermore, it is likely that the main image in the Mahābodhi Temple, possibly the very one that today occupies the place of greatest importance, served as a model for other images throughout the Pāla lands and the rest of Asia. As a prototypical image, its influence must have been profound.<sup>148</sup>

### Crowned Buddhas and Jina Buddhas

Śākyamuni is sometimes depicted wearing a crown, or diadem, and ornaments, such as necklaces and earrings (cat. no. 15). Adorned in this way, he is known as *mukūṭadhārin* (headdress bearer). The major occasion on which he is shown thus adorned is immediately after his enlightenment, when he visited Akaniṣṭha, a heavenly realm, to preach to the Bodhisattvas there. The crown and jewelry emphasize the aspect of the Buddha as a universal sovereign, drawing a visual analogy between the attainment of Buddhahood and coronation as a king. Unlike the monk's robes, which signal his renunciation, the royal adornments evoke the Buddha's majesty, kingly qualities, and omniscience.

The crown symbolizes the five transcendent insights (*jñānas*) that the Buddha attained as part of the enlightenment process. These may be manifested or personified as the five Jina Buddhas, who are sometimes



depicted in the crown itself. Each denoting a separate transcendental insight that the Buddha attained, the Jina Buddhas also are generally shown wearing crowns and ornaments. Each of the Jinas is associated with a directional realm and a *jñāna*: Akṣobhya (east, mirrorlike insight), Ratnasambhava (south, insight of universal quality), Amitābha (west, discriminating insight), Amoghasiddhi (north, all-accomplishing insight), and Vairocana (center, all-pervading insight). As demonstrations of the attainment of the realizations or insights they represent, the Jinas often appear above the heads of various other Buddhist figures (cat. no. 33).

Crowned Buddhas and Jina Buddhas appear widely in the art of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism and are popular in the art of the Pāla period, particularly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Images of crowned Buddhas also appear with great frequency in the art of Pāla-dependent regions.

### Bodhisattvas

Mahāsattva Bodhisattvas constitute one of the most popular subjects in Pāla period art. Unlike Buddhas, who wear the robes of monks, Bodhisattvas are arrayed like kings. Not only do they wear royal garments, but they are always adorned with jewelry; a crown, diadem, or other headdress; and elegantly styled coiffures. The ornaments represent the spiritual perfections of a Bodhisattva and the abundant resources and liberative techniques (*upāya*) that a Bodhisattva commands in order to liberate sentient beings. The luxurious worldly attire of a Bodhisattva indicates the fact that the Bodhisattva participates fully in worldly life, but does so out of compassion and therefore without any loss of purity or equanimity.

The Pāla artistic repertoire includes a number of Bodhisattvas, although there are several highly popular ones, each of whom may be depicted in numerous forms and have a host of names. The multiplication of names and iconographic forms is an index of a deity's popularity, because the variants generally emerge in the course of active worship, ritual, or meditation. The most popular Bodhisattvas include Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Maitreya, who also are found widely throughout the rest of the Buddhist world.

Avalokiteśvara may be the single most popular Bodhisattva in the whole of Buddhism. The embodiment of infinite compassion (*karuṇā*), Avalokiteśvara carries attributes that symbolize his peaceful nature. Most characteristically, he holds the lotus flower (*padma*), specifically the white *puṇḍarīka* lotus, as well as a string of recitation beads (*akṣamālā*). Avalokiteśvara is often accompanied by two female attendants, Tārā and Bhṛṅkuṭī (cat. no. 33). Tārā also is an important votive figure in her

own right and is frequently depicted as the principal deity in a religious image (cat. nos. 6 and 7). Avalokiteśvara is usually considered to be an emanation or associate of the Jina Buddha Amitābha, who presides over the western realm. Avalokiteśvara has numerous forms and names, including both peaceful and wrathful (*krodha*) aspects.

Mañjuśrī is the embodiment of *prajñā* (transcendental wisdom) (cat. no. 25). Often treated as an emanation of the Jina Buddha Akṣobhya, his principal attributes are the sword (*khaḍga*) with which he destroys ignorance and a book (*pustaka*), specifically, a Prajñāpāramitā text that symbolizes his knowledge and his profound insight into reality. He also sometimes carries a blue lotus (*nīlotpala* or *nīlapadma*). Like Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī has a variety of forms, including peaceful and wrathful (*krodha*) manifestations.

Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī are often paired as attendants of Śākyamuni Buddha (cat. nos. 161 and 162). In this combination, they represent the two components essential for the attainment of Buddhahood (*bodhi*): compassion and wisdom. Images showing the three figures together represent in personified form the summation of the goal of the Buddhist religion, that is, enlightenment.

Maitreya Bodhisattva (cat. no. 49) differs from all over Bodhisattvas in the imminence of his attainment of Buddhahood, for he is destined to become the next mortal Buddha, after Śākyamuni. By the Pāla period, his identifying attributes include a *stūpa* adorning his headdress and a *nāgakesara* flower. Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya are sometimes paired as attendants of Śākyamuni Buddha (cat. no. 29).

### Female Deities

The prevalence of images of females in the art of Buddhism after the Gupta period is notable. Some of the female deities occur independently, some normally appear associated with male figures, and some occur in both contexts. When paired with male figures, the female generally represents the transcendental wisdom (*prajñā*) aspect of the wholistic unity between the figures, while the male embodies the compassion (*karuṇā*) aspect.

One of the most important of these females is Prajñāpāramitā, who by virtue of embodying wisdom is honored as the mother of all Buddhas (*buddhamātā*, or *buddhamāṭṛkā*) and is herself essentially a Buddha (cat. no. 8). As her name implies, Prajñāpāramitā is the personification of the Prajñāpāramitā texts, the fundamental literature of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is not clear that Prajñāpāramitā was ever the focus of a substantial devotional movement, and accordingly she is not the most popularly depicted female deity in the surviving art of the Pāla period.

The most popularly worshipped goddess in Buddhism is Tārā, who has many forms and names (cat. nos. 6, 7, 17, and 38) and who is the focus of her own devotional cult and exoteric and esoteric meditation. Her basic form, Śyāma Tārā (Dark or Shining Tārā), is sometimes defined as Green Tārā, for in paintings she is usually depicted as green in color (cat. no. 113). Her principal attribute is the blue lotus (*nīlotpala*). Her other principal form is Sita Tārā (White Tārā), who is white in color and carries a white lotus (*punḍarīka*) as her principal emblem. As a powerful savior, Śyāma Tārā, in the form of Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā, is known for saving her devotees from the eight dire perils, such as attacks by wild animals or death by drowning. Although as a female deity Tārā always represents transcendent wisdom, she is more often worshipped and supplicated for her maternal compassion. When she embodies the totality of enlightenment, rather than one of its constituent elements, Tārā may be portrayed as sitting on the lion throne and surrounded by the emblems of a fully enlightened Buddha.

Female divinities abound in Tantric Buddhist iconography. Sometimes they are paired with male consorts of equal status, as when the female Buddha Vajradhātviśvarī accompanies Vajrasattva (cat. nos. 111 and 116). The five Jina Buddhas have female counterparts, as do most of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in their tantric aspects. Tantric female Buddhas of the Ḍākinī type are generally portrayed as naked, dancing on a corpse, and proffering a skull cup. In paintings they are generally red in color. When they have consorts they are accompanied by male Buddhas of the Heruka type, who are semi-wrathful in appearance and generally wear animal skins and bone ornaments. Two of the major tantric female Buddhas, Vajrayoginī and Vajravārāhī, may occur alone as the presiding deities of their own *maṇḍalas*. In this exhibition, Vajrayoginī appears with her consort Hevajra (cat. no. 153), and Vajravārāhī appears with Cakrasaṃvara (cat. nos. 92, 117, and 125). While these figures and others are known in Indic texts of the Pāla period and must have been portrayed in Pāla art, they are most well known in the surviving corpora of Nepali and Tibetan art based upon Pāla models.

## HINDU IMAGES

### Viṣṇu

Viṣṇu (Pervader), preserver of the universe, is the most commonly represented Hindu god in the art of the later Pāla period. His images become increasingly common after the tenth century, particularly in Bengal, and by the eleventh and twelfth centuries depictions of him outnumber representations of most other Hindu gods

combined. This popularity indicates that Viṣṇu was the focus of a very strong cult, although the origins and development of his cult and the reasons for its strength are still to be explored. In general, Viṣṇu's broad appeal reflects his benevolent and auspicious nature and his role in the Hindu pantheon as the chief maintainer of social and cosmic order.

By the late Pāla period, Viṣṇu's iconography was well established, and he appears in a variety of incarnations and iconic forms; the range of manifestations is far greater than was possible to represent in this exhibition. In his iconic forms, Viṣṇu is always shown as a kingly figure, adorned with a crown and jewelry, usually including necklaces, armbands, anklets, earrings, and an ornamented girdle (cat. nos. 36-37). Also, he characteristically wears a long floral garland that reaches to his knees, called a *vanamālā* (forest garland). Viṣṇu is generally accompanied by his vehicle (*vāhana*), the bird-man Garuḍa (cat. no. 22). Like Viṣṇu himself, Garuḍa, who flies in the air, is a solar deity. Garuḍa is the destroyer of serpents and is considered to be a remover of obstacles to religious attainment, although he is less famous in this regard than the elephant-headed god Gaṇeśa.

One key to the widespread devotion to Viṣṇu may lie in the study of the form of Viṣṇu known as Trivikrama, for hundreds, if not thousands, of images of Viṣṇu as Trivikrama were made in Bengal in the late Pāla period. The name Trivikrama refers to the three steps by which Viṣṇu established his dominion over the three worlds, that is, the heaven, earth, and netherworld.<sup>149</sup> The name also is an epithet of the god in his Vāmana (dwarf) incarnation. The three steps of Viṣṇu are mentioned in the earliest scriptural references to him and remained central to his symbolism and worship. They encapsulate the nature of Viṣṇu as an all-pervasive, transcendent deity who established his universal dominion peacefully and subsequently uses his powers to protect and sustain human life and society.

Trivikrama is the seventh in a series of twenty-four icons (*caturvīṃśatimūrti*) of the god that apparently had been codified in Hindu iconography some time after the Gupta period.<sup>150</sup> The conception of the twenty-four forms is based on the fact that Viṣṇu's four chief attributes, his mace (*gadā*), lotus (*padma*), discus (*cakra*), and conch shell (*śaṅkha*), can be arranged in twenty-four different ways in his four hands. When depicted in any of these variations, the god is shown in a standing form (*sthānakamūrti*), with his body in a frontal, unflexed posture. In the Trivikrama form, the mace appears in Viṣṇu's upper right hand, the lotus in his lower right hand, the discus in the upper left hand, and the conch in the lower left hand (cat. no. 36). Any variation in the placement or inclusion of these attributes would identify the figure as another of the twenty-four icons. To the viewer, however,

except for the rotation of attributes in the hands of the god, depictions of the twenty-four icons are strikingly similar.

Although lists of these icons are well known from iconographic texts, the specific meaning of each form and reasons why it might be preferred by artists and patrons are unknown. Thus, the overwhelming popularity of the Trivikrama icon during the late Pāla period cannot yet fully be explained. Viṣṇu's roles as an upholder of order and establisher of a vast, all-pervading dominion provide natural analogies with earthly kingship. Human kings, as protectors and preservers of their dominions, are often likened to Viṣṇu; indeed, human kings are often seen as incarnations of the god. Documentation of the relationship between kingship and Viṣṇu from the Pāla period is nowhere more eloquently expressed than in the *Rāmācarita*, a poem of over two hundred verses composed in *śleṣa* (double entendre) form. Written by the Pāla court poet Sandhyākaranandin in the twelfth century, it records the feats and exploits of King Rāmapāla and at the same time tells the story of Rāma, the model of earthly kingship who is also an incarnation of the god Viṣṇu.<sup>151</sup> Though it is not directly stated that Rāmapāla is an incarnation of Viṣṇu, implicit in the story's interpretability on two levels is an identification between the king and the god. Such parallelisms between kings and gods are commonly drawn in the literature, inscriptions, and art of other kingdoms of ancient India and were not invented by the Pālas nor used exclusively by them. Such analogies between earthly rulers and divine sovereigns also occur in Southeast Asia, undoubtedly based at least in part on the Indic model.

Images of Viṣṇu in his twenty-four forms usually include depictions of his two consorts, the goddesses Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī (cat. nos. 36-37). Lakṣmī, who is also known as Śrī, is the goddess of prosperity. She appears in Indic literature as the consort of a number of male gods, but Lakṣmī is known primarily as the wife of Viṣṇu, who accompanies him in his various incarnations in her own series of forms. She may be shown carrying a variety of attributes, such as a fly-whisk (*caurī*) or a lotus (*padma*). As the goddess of good fortune, she symbolizes not only the wealth and well-being of the material world, but spiritual riches as well. Viṣṇu's other principal consort, the goddess Sarasvatī, represents knowledge and the arts. Generally depicted in art carrying her stringed musical instrument, the vina, Sarasvatī personifies learning, speech, poetry, and music. While Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī are sometimes described as rivals, it is likely that, flanking an image of Viṣṇu, they represent the components of religious achievement, just as the Bodhisattvas flanking a Buddha image represent the components of Buddhahood. On the level of popular devotion, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī reinforce Viṣṇu's nature as a beneficent promoter of human welfare, abundance, and culture.

It is likely that Viṣṇu's ten principal incarnations

were codified during the Pāla period. The earliest known textual source that lists all ten incarnations (*daśāvatāra*) is the *Gītāgovinda*, written by Jayadeva, court poet to King Lakṣmaṇasena of the Sena dynasty in the twelfth century. However, it is likely that the ten forms had been codified prior to that time. Although there are variations in the list, the ten usually cited are: Matsya (fish); Kūrma (tortoise); Varāha (boar); Nṛsimha (man-lion); Vāmana (dwarf), including Trivikrama; Paraśurāma (Rāma with the axe); Rāma (a king); Kṛṣṇa (the dark one); Balarāma ("Rāma of strength," a brother of Kṛṣṇa); and Kalkin (a future incarnation that has not yet appeared). Individual representations of the figures occur in the stelae of the Pāla period and sets of all ten may have been installed as parts of the iconographic programs of temples. One object in this exhibition, a carved conch shell, bears depictions of the ten incarnations as its principal subject (cat. no. 52). Certain forms are found more commonly than others, suggesting that some of the incarnations were more popular than others and were installed as individual objects of devotion.

Although Viṣṇu's overwhelming popularity during the late Pāla period, particularly in Bengal, is not fully understood, the strength of his cult is evident in the fact that Bengal was host to later Vaiṣṇava revivals. In particular, later Bengal Vaiṣṇavism was revived by the mystic Caitanya (1485-1534), who emphasized loving devotion to the Kṛṣṇa incarnation of Viṣṇu. Caitanya's followers founded several major Vaiṣṇava subschools that have remained influential to the present day.

### Sūrya

Sūrya, the sun god, is also very popular in late-Pāla period art of Bengal. Images of him generally display a standard group of elements, and there is little variation in his images within this configuration (cat. no. 40). The god is normally shown in a rigid, unflexed frontal posture in a two-armed form holding the stem of a blossoming lotus in each hand. Dressed in royal garb, with jewelry and a crown, the style of his garments sometimes reflects his origin outside of India, probably in the Iranian area. He invariably wears boots, indicative of his foreign origin and reflective of his role as a horseman who rides a chariot. His chariot is pulled by seven horses representing the seven days of the week, which are sometimes depicted along the pedestal of images of the god.

Whether or not he is the focus of a specific cult, Sūrya is worshipped by Hindus regularly. Devotions to him include ceremonies and prayers that recognize his celestial movement: daily, particularly at sunrise and sunset; weekly, in a seven-day cycle; monthly, as the sun travels through the zodiac; and annually, on occasions such as the



equinoxes; and on special occasions, such as eclipses. The Sūrya cult was also associated with worship of a series of celestial bodies, including planetary deities and the moon, reflecting strong concern for astronomical forces and their impact on human life in ancient India.

Images of Sūrya often show him accompanied by two male attendants, Daṇḍa and Piṅgala. Daṇḍa, whose name means staff, or rod, is generally shown carrying a staff or rod and is depicted as a youthful figure, while Piṅgala is potbellied and bearded and carries the pen and inkpot necessary to carry out his work as Sūrya's scribe. His charioteer, Aruṇa (Dawn), is sometimes said to be the elder brother of Garuḍa, Viṣṇu's vehicle. Although in Pāla art he is commonly shown with legs, Aruṇa is usually described as being legless as a result of having been born prematurely, before his legs had formed. In Pāla period sculptures, Aruṇa may appear in the center of Sūrya's pedestal in front of the god's feet, as if driving the seven horses (cat. no. 20).

There is considerable discrepancy in texts about the names and number of Sūrya's wives. One wife, Uṣas (Dawn), is sometimes shown behind Aruṇa, while two other wives flank the central god (cat. no. 20). Names often cited for these wives include Sañjñā, Chāyā, Rājñī, and Nisprabhā. However, because the women do not carry individualizing attributes, their role in the images seems to be almost as symmetrically placed generic consorts rather than unique beings.

### Śiva and Related Deities

The iconography of the god Śiva (Auspicious) is extraordinarily complex, for the god appears in a myriad of forms (*mūrti*) in the art of South Asia. These include a variety of extremes, for he may be shown as a meditating, ascetic yogi (cat. no. 39), a loving husband (cat. no. 18), or a fiercely energetic, all-powerful being (cat. no. 28). However, not all of the forms of the god known in the Hindu repertoire occurred in the Pāla period artistic corpus.

The main object of veneration in a temple dedicated to Śiva is almost invariably a *linga* (sign) made of stone or metal. An abstract, cylindrical form, the *linga* symbolizes the phallus of the god and signifies his procreative energies. Placed in a pedestal called a *yoni*, which indicates the female generative organ, the *linga* and *yoni* together symbolize the unity within duality that is central to much of Hindu thought. Only a few examples of *lingas* from the eastern Gangetic region are known, however. Surviving Śaivite imagery is mainly in the form of anthropomorphic representations that were probably used in architectural niches on the temples rather than as votive objects in the shrines.

Śiva may be recognized by a number of features and

attributes that are generally depicted regardless of his form. He has a distinctive third eye in the center of his forehead, placed vertically, and his hair is commonly arranged in a crown of matted locks (*jaṭāmukuta*), the hair style of ascetics and yogis. His body is smeared with ashes from a cremation ground to show that he is beyond the social conventions and hierarchies that Viṣṇu serves to maintain. He may be shown with only two arms, or he may have many arms. His most characteristic attribute is a trident (*triśūla*), an invincible weapon against enemies and evil. His vehicle (*vāhana*) is the bull Nandi, upon whom he rides and who is most often shown in art reclining near his master. In the Pāla period art of Bengal, he is also shown dancing upon Nandi's back in a format that is highly distinctive of the regional style.

Unlike Viṣṇu, who has two principal wives that are given approximately equal emphasis in art flanking the god, Śiva has one principal consort, the goddess Pārvatī (Mountain Daughter). In some texts, other goddesses are also given the rank of wife, but these, such as the goddess Gaṅgā, the personification of the Ganges River, are rarely depicted by his side. Through her own practice of extreme austerity, Pārvatī became qualified to marry Śiva, the greatest ascetic. By marrying him, Pārvatī helped to channel Śiva's tremendous store of accumulated energy that was threatening to destabilize the cosmos. Pārvatī often appears with Śiva, as in the Umā-Maheśvara form, where she is shown in his loving embrace (cat. no. 18). Like Śiva, Pārvatī may be peaceful, as in her Umā form, or she may be fierce and terrifying. Her attributes vary, but include a mirror (*darpaṇa*) and a string of recitation beads (*akṣamālā*).

Although explanations of how they achieved their parenthood vary, Śiva and Pārvatī's principal offspring are Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya. Gaṇeśa is an elephant-headed god who is the remover of obstacles (in the religious path) and has become one of the most popularly worshipped deities of the Hindu pantheon. Invoked at the start of any venture and worshipped daily by his devotees, Gaṇeśa is considered to be one of the most auspicious of gods. Temples dedicated to him alone are virtually unknown in the Indic sphere, though images of him appear nearly ubiquitously on Hindu temples of every sect and persuasion, usually in the first position at the beginning of a sequence of images, where he is invoked before all others.<sup>152</sup> Individual images of Gaṇeśa from the Pāla period show him in a variety of forms, including a dancing mode (cat. no. 21). Kārttikeya also occurs singly in Pāla period images, although unfortunately none are included in this exhibition. He, like Gaṇeśa, often appears accompanying Śiva and Pārvatī. His vehicle is a peacock, and he has six faces, which are not always shown in art. Kārttikeya is especially popular in south India, where he is famed as the protector of armies.

In addition to Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, and Pārvatī, who are discussed above, the Hindu pantheon includes a number of major female deities who had substantial independent followings. A major goddess who was widely worshipped in Bengal and Bihar and frequently portrayed in Pāla period art is Durgā. Her basic iconographic form is as an invincible warriorress accompanied by her lion *vāhana*, brandishing an array of weapons that had been given to her by the most powerful gods. Durgā's most celebrated victory was over Mahiṣa, a demon of death and time that could not be conquered by all the gods combined.<sup>153</sup> The related iconographic form, Durgā Mahiṣāsūramardinī (Durgā as slayer of the *asura* [demon] Mahiṣa), was a widespread artistic theme of the Pāla period, particularly in Bengal, but is not represented in the exhibition.<sup>154</sup>

Fierce goddesses sometimes appear in the Pāla artistic repertoire, such as Cāmuṇḍā (cat. no. 24), whose frightening nature is visible in her emaciated, skeletal body and the garland of skull ornaments she wears. A fierce (*ugra*) form of Durgā, Cāmuṇḍā's worship is associated with tantric practices and became especially popular in the Bengal region.

## JAIN IMAGES

Jain images do not appear with frequency in the surviving art of the Pāla period. This is somewhat surprising, since Magadha was also the homeland of Mahāvīra, the Jain Tīrthamkara (ford-maker, that is, perfected being who reveals the path to liberation) who lived there as a contemporary of Śākyamuni Buddha. Although the Jain and Buddhist religions have much in common, Jainism never achieved the widespread popularity enjoyed by Buddhism, nor was it exported to other regions of Asia. Therefore, it was not fostered by the international patronage that enabled Buddhism to flourish in its homeland long after it had died out elsewhere in the subcontinent.

Depictions of the Tīrthamkaras comprise the major iconic subject of Jain art. Such figures, also called Jinās (victors), may be shown standing (cat. no. 23) or seated and clothed or unclothed. As ascetics, Jinās appear unadorned by jewelry or other ornaments. Their distended earlobes, like those of Buddha figures, are reminders of their abandonment of worldly riches.

## HISTORY OF KNOWLEDGE OF PĀLA PERIOD ART

The Pāla dynasty first became known to modern scholars in 1780, when the copperplate of King Devapāla was

discovered at Monghyr.<sup>155</sup> But the modern rediscovery of the art traditions associated with the Pāla kingdom did not occur until the nineteenth century, when a number of individuals mainly involved in the British Civil Service or other government employment in India visited some of the sites where Pāla sculptures were preserved. Descriptions of some of the important sites were made, and some Pāla period works began to find their way into major collections, like those of the Patna and Indian Museums in India and the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museums in London.

However, Pāla art initially generated little excitement except within Bihar and Bengal, where the art was seen to represent the period of the last great Buddhist and Hindu kingdoms of the region prior to the Muslim conquest. During the early twentieth century, western scholars were mainly concerned with the art of the Gupta period and earlier, probably partly out of a desire to reconstruct the more ancient history of South Asia, but also undoubtedly as a result of the aesthetic compatibility between those styles and the then-current European taste. For the most part, post-Gupta artistic styles were seen as overly ornate and conventionalized and reflective of a deterioration of what was viewed as the classical purity of the Gupta idiom. In the last few decades, however, regional studies of South Asian art have blossomed and Pāla art, as well as many other previously neglected styles of the post-Gupta period, have taken their rightful places in the story of South Asia's artistic history.

The study of Pāla period art was further hampered, particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by misunderstandings about its subject matter. The prevalence of female imagery and the presence of some overt sexual symbolism offended the sensibilities of early scholars, who believed that such elements indicated the moral decay of the culture that produced them, and who viewed these traditions through the window of their Victorian era Christianity. Tantrism, which can only be understood properly through initiation and study of its complex forms, was misinterpreted as corrupt and debased, and the art displaying tantric concepts was dismissed as unworthy of serious scholarly attention. This misunderstanding was further perpetuated because early scholars primarily studied the schools of Buddhism that were based on the Pāli textual tradition, which reinforced their bias against some of the other forms of Buddhism.

To add to the difficulty of appreciating Pāla period art, most of the stone sculptures were carved out of blackish or greyish stone, much darker than the grey used in the Bactro-Gandhāra region. In the dimly lit museums of the times, the intricacy and beauty of many of the images could not be appreciated.

The range in quality from unequivocal masterpieces to clumsily executed works must also have presented a

dilemma to those attempting to assess the place of Pāla period art in the South Asian repertoire. While a similar range must have existed in virtually every other period of Indic art, the scarcity of examples in some other styles elevated the status of even the poorest works to that of precious treasures of a bygone era. But such an abundance of examples from the Pāla period survives that the full range of its quality is easily seen. The fact that such a range exists is part of the story, however, for it demonstrates that the art was truly a reflection of the culture it served. Commissioned or purchased as expressions of piety by the most humble members of society as well as the princely purses, the works of art of the Pāla period graced the simplest religious shrines as well as the most lavishly patronized establishments. Regardless of its aesthetic quality, each example of Pāla art is an invaluable historical document; without such breadth and depth of documentation, it would be impossible to establish the schools, chronology, and iconographic repertoire of the period in any detail.

In addition to the fact that regional studies have become quite prevalent in the study of South Asian art, appreciation of Pāla art has also benefitted from the recent popularity enjoyed by Tibetan and Nepali art, both of which depend heavily on the Pāla tradition for their aesthetic and iconographic content. Furthermore, recent studies of the Southeast Asian artistic traditions have led to more detailed searches for Indic sources, such as the Pāla tradition, again leading to a keener interest in understanding the Pāla art forms. Thus, for a variety of reasons, Pāla art has now taken its rightful place in the history of South Asian and even pan-Asian art.

## RELATED ART TRADITIONS IN SOUTH ASIA

After the Gupta period, it becomes increasingly easy to discern the regional styles of South Asian art. Flourishing alongside the Pāla tradition were numerous other regional styles, each distinctive and reflective of its local religious, cultural, and political heritage. Yet, in spite of a certain insularity within these subcultures, the traditions often intermingled as a result of political, economic, social, and religious interactions. The Pāla kingdom was not isolated from contemporary developments in South Asia. Political contacts between the Pāla kings and monarchs of other regional dynasties, economic associations through trade and manufacture of goods, marriage alliances, and travel for religious purposes in ancient India linked the Pāla kingdom with the whole of Indic culture.

Metal sculptures in styles closely related to some of the Pāla subschools are well known in neighboring regions. These include Sirpur in Madhya Pradesh<sup>156</sup> and Achutrajpur in Orissa.<sup>157</sup> While the dynamics of the

relationships among these workshops are yet to be explained, it is evident from the works themselves that the artists worked within a common technical and stylistic idiom.

Some artistic ties to other regions were forged by blending of artistic styles in the border regions, particularly along the boundaries of the Pāla territories. For example, in the interface region between Bengal and Orissa, a distinctive artistic style melding the Pāla and Orissan traditions developed,<sup>158</sup> while on the western border of the Pāla empire, a mixture with the style current under the Cedi kings emerged.<sup>159</sup>

More far-reaching artistic interchanges also occurred, namely, the spread of the Pāla style to other Asian realms by various routes and agencies. Two artistic traditions contemporaneous with the Pāla dynasty were particularly important for their roles in the international transmission of the Pāla style. One is that of ancient Kāmarūpa, corresponding to modern Assam and parts of Arunachal Pradesh, which linked the Pāla lands with Myanmar (Burma) and may have served as a corridor to Tibet; the other is that of the Buddhist centers in the Tamil south, particularly Kāñcīpuram and Nāgapattinam, whose proximity to south Indian seaports made them stopping points for pilgrims and devotees journeying between the Pāla lands and Southeast Asia and China. Both of these regions served as vital links between the Indic Pāla styles and their destinations abroad, and as sources of artistic influence in their own right.

## Kāmarūpa (Assam)

An exploration of the artistic traditions of Kāmarūpa is particularly important for tracing the overland interactions between the Pāla lands and Myanmar (Burma), for Kāmarūpa was literally a corridor between the two cultures. The geographic proximity of Kāmarūpa and the Pāla domains led to ongoing political and cultural contacts.<sup>160</sup> Kāmarūpa also may have linked the Pāla lands with Tibet, for one of the ancient routes to Tibet was through Kāmarūpa. Stylistic associations between the artistic traditions of Tibet and Kāmarūpa have not yet been traced. However, it is notable that the Tibetan name for the type of stone used in many early Tibetan images, particularly examples of the twelfth century, is Kāmaru, suggesting that the stone either derived from Kāmarūpa or was traded through the region.<sup>161</sup>

Evidence of an early artistic tradition in Kāmarūpa is scant, with only a few extant works of art predating the eighth century. However, a few stone images from about the eighth century and later suggest that the artistic traditions began to develop around the time the Pālas were ruling in Bihar and Bengal. The crudeness and



awkwardness of many of the works suggest a fledgling artistic tradition rather than the transference of a well-developed tradition from ephemeral media to more durable materials. The stimulus toward significant artistic production and the development of stone carving apparently occurred around the same time, perhaps around the eighth century.<sup>162</sup> A number of stone pieces that are clearly of Pāla (mainly Bengali) manufacture have been found in Assam, indicating transportation of images to the region from the Pāla territories.<sup>163</sup> Unfortunately, the dating of the Assamese stone materials has not been established. However, based on comparisons with Pāla period types that must have served as precedents, it is likely that most of the known stone images produced in Assam on the Pāla model date from the eleventh or twelfth centuries and later.

The Assamese sculptures are generally carved of a greyish or beige stone that is found locally; much lighter in color, it is also coarser in grain than the stones used by Pāla carvers. Most of the images in the Assamese style are far less detailed than the Pāla works, perhaps not only as a

result of artistic choice but also due to limitations imposed by the stone itself.

A sculpture of the Hindu god Viṣṇu found at Ambari, Gauhati, demonstrates the indebtedness of the Assamese school to the Pāla style, for the standard components of a late Pāla period image are present (fig. 3). These include the front-facing, stiffly posed central god accompanied by his two consorts in accentuated *tribhaṅga* poses, flying *vidyādhara*s at the top of the stele, and a *kirttimukha* motif at the apex. The image clearly follows the Pāla stele format, with its pronounced base featuring a carved representation of Garuḍa. The backslab is essentially rounded but peaks to a point at the top, suggesting a date of around eleventh or twelfth century for the piece. In contrast to a typical Pāla image of this date, however, the sculpture is virtually devoid of embellishment, lacking such decorative features as detailing of the backslab, elaboration of the lotus pedestals, and definition of the clouds behind the *vidyādhara*s. The rim of the stele, restored on the left side, is a simple band that is far removed from the lavish floral and decorative bands found so often in Pāla creations. It is possible that these details would have been added by painting, although the effect of the relief is still that of a scaled-down version of the Pāla style. Whether the decision to simplify the forms reflects economic considerations, so that the work would require fewer hours of labor, or aesthetic preferences, cannot be determined. The striking resemblance of this simplified scheme to Myanmari (Burmese) reliefs, such as those on the Ānanda Temple at Pagan, is notable.<sup>164</sup>

Another image probably of the same date, similarly scaled down from the elaborate style of the Pāla regions, shows Nṛsiṃha, the man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu, tearing out the entrails of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu (fig. 4). The use of the carved band around the stele is similar to that in the previous sculpture and indicates a local rather than Pāla tradition.

Tantric images apparently were produced in Assam during this period, as may be seen from a representation of the goddess Cāmuṇḍā, holding a skull cup (*kapāla*) and seated upon a reclining male figure (fig. 5). Found at the Kāmākhya Temple in Gauhati, the image is also less elaborate than its Pāla period contemporaries. The distinctive treatment of the pedestal and the circular, plain halo behind the goddess are features shared with other examples from the Assam region but not seen in Pāla examples.

Several sculptures of Hindu sages (*ṛṣis*) were found at Ambari in Gauhati, Assam, and probably also date from the eleventh or twelfth century. Striking in their simplicity, yet reminiscent of Pāla period carvings in the shape of the stelae, the images clearly display the Kāmarūpa idiom, as seen in this example (fig. 6). While *ṛṣis* are known in Pāla art (cat. no. 35), there is no known precedent for such a



Figure 3. Viṣṇu. Ambari, Gauhati, Assam, India, Ca. eleventh or twelfth century. Assam State Museum, Gauhati.





Figure 4. Nṛsiṃha. Gauhati, Assam, India. Ca. eleventh or twelfth century. Assam State Museum, Gauhati.

figure in terms of style. The image is striking in its resemblance to figure types seen in Myanmar (Burmese) art of about the early twelfth century, such as the reliefs at the Ānanda Temple at Pagan,<sup>165</sup> and it is evident that such images document a connection between the Pāla and Myanmar styles. Since the Myanmar styles are ultimately indebted to the Pāla traditions, it is likely that some of the transfer of style occurred through the medium of the Kāmarūpa region; it is also possible that the Kāmarūpa style represents a conflation of the Pāla and Myanmar traditions.

A final example from Assam is carved of the blacker, more densely grained stone characteristic of the Pāla idiom, yet is clearly a local product (fig. 7). Viṣṇu is shown in an unusual seated form; the god may be recognized primarily by the presence of Garuḍa in the center of his pedestal, as well as by the remains of his attributes. In this case, the pedestal configuration is highly reminiscent of Pāla examples, and in general the image is more elaborate than



Figure 5. Cāmuṇḍā. At Kāmākhyā Temple. Gauhati, Assam, India. Ca. twelfth century.

the other Kāmarūpa examples illustrated above. This may be due in part to the denser grain of the stone, which may have enabled the artists to carve in greater detail. However, the treatment of the facial features, the broad shoulders and angular body, and the shape of the lotus pedestal indicate local workmanship. The plain, circular halo behind the figure is a feature not found in Pāla art, but it occurs in several Assamese examples, such as the image of Cāmuṇḍā discussed above.

#### South India (Tamilnadu)

Also important to the understanding of the Pāla traditions and their spread abroad is the little-known school of Buddhist sculpture that thrived in the Tamilnadu region of south India during the Cōḷa period concurrent with the Pāla idiom. Buddhism spread to south India in the earliest known phase of proselytization in the third century B.C.





Figure 6. Hindu sage (*ṛṣi*). Ambari, Gauhati, Assam, India. Ca. early twelfth century. Assam State Museum, Gauhati.

and prevailed there through at least the fifth century. However, it was eclipsed by the emergence of Hinduism as the dominant religion favored by prominent ruling families such as the Pallavas, Pāṇdyas, and Cōlas. Yet in a few places, notably Kāñcīpuram and Nāgapattinam, Buddhist communities survived after the fifth century. To a large extent, this must have been due to the influx of international visitors, for the monasteries in this region were near the seaports that linked India with the ports of Southeast Asia and China. Visitors travelling between China and Southeast Asia and the Pāla lands stopped at these places, sometimes for prolonged sojourns; it is well known that Marco Polo stopped at Nāgapattinam in the thirteenth century on his way to China. Benefitting from the patterns of prevailing winds, monsoons, and ocean currents that favored the south Indian ports, these monasteries survived long after Buddhism ceased to be a dominant force in the region.

Inscriptional evidence documenting ties between south India and the Pāla realm occurs on a number of metal images found at Kurkihār, one of the principal



Figure 7. Viṣṇu. Gauhati, Assam, India. Ca. eleventh or twelfth century. Assam State Museum, Gauhati.

artistic centers of the Pāla period. These inscriptions record donations by monks and devotees who came to Magadha from Kāñcīpuram not far from what is now the city of Madras.<sup>166</sup> Because the images do not betray any south Indian stylistic features, but are indistinguishable from others found at Kurkihār, it may be suggested that south Indian pilgrims purchased the images while in north India. Further ties between the south and the Pāla lands are documented by the fact that a monk from Kāñcīpuram named Dharmapāla became the head of Nālandā monastery during the time of Xuanzang's visit to India.

There is scant information about Buddhism and Buddhist art in south India during the period that the Pālas ruled in the northeast portion of the subcontinent, except for an astonishing corpus of about 350 Buddhist metal images found at Nāgapattinam near Tañjāvūr (Tanjore).<sup>167</sup> Although Buddhist activity at Nāgapattinam spanned the eighth through the seventeenth centuries, the images date primarily from the eleventh and twelfth centuries and are mainly the products of Cōla period workshops. Like the



more famous Hindu metal images of the Cōla period, the Buddhist images display the same technical perfection that is the hallmark of the style.

A splendid example of the south Indian school is a metal representation of a standing Buddha perhaps dating from around the eleventh century (fig. 8). Although the piece has been attributed to Nāgapattinam, it is not identical in style to most of the images that have been found there and may represent another subschool of Tamilnadu. The image is created in the typical Cōla configuration, with a round base fitted with holes to allow the image to be carried in procession suspended on poles, and with facial features and hair style typical of south Indian and related imagery of Sri Lanka. However, the manner in which the

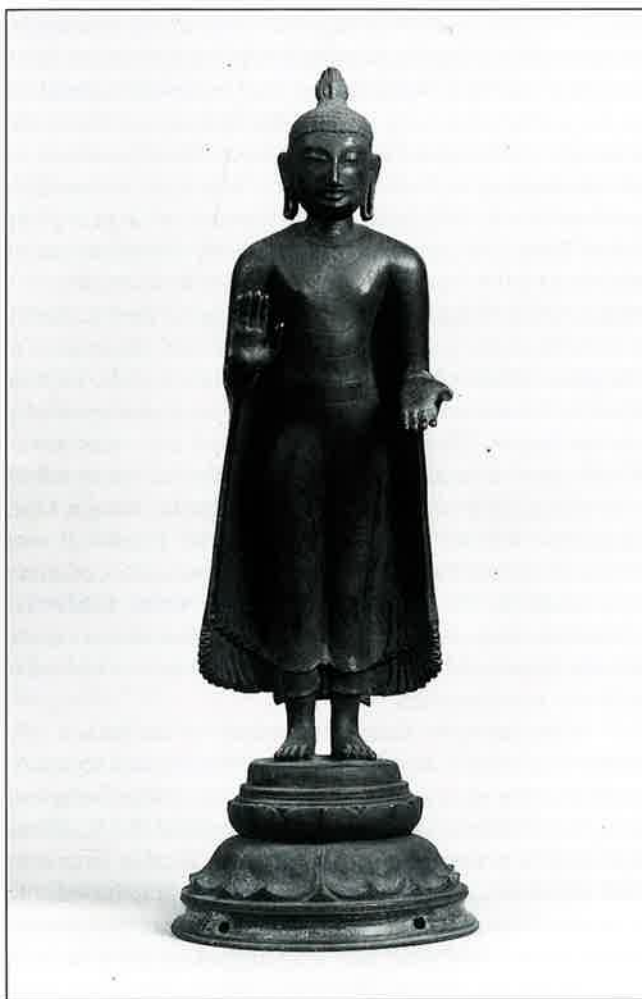


Figure 8. Buddha. Probably from Tamilnadu, India. Ca. eleventh century. Collection of The Asia Society, New York (1979.15).

robe is worn by the Buddha relates to the pattern seen commonly in Pāla period metal images and may be contrasted to the usual south Indian style prevalent on the metal images from Nāgapattinam.<sup>168</sup>

The similarities between this south Indian example

and the metal piece from the Pāla region discussed above (cat. no. 47) are also striking. The emphasis on the pleats at the bottom of the robes and the circular lotus pedestals are strongly related. Further, both images bear features that resemble examples from Myanmar (cat. no. 64), most notably the attention to the detailing of the pleats at the hem of the Buddha's robe. While the treatment of the pleats differs in each of these examples, the concept of the adornment of the hem is related and distinguishes such pieces from those of unrelated idioms.

The complicated interrelationships among the artistic traditions of the Pāla regions, south India, and Southeast Asia may be surmised not only on the basis of artistic evidence, but also on the basis of inscriptional records. One epigraph reveals that a Buddhist *vihāra* was built at Nāgapattinam by King Māravijayottuṅgavarman of the great Śrīvijayan empire of Southeast Asia in the twenty-first year of the reign of Rājaraṇa I, the great Cōla king.<sup>169</sup> It is likely that images were created for this early eleventh-century endowment, but one can only imagine whether they displayed stylistic combinations reflective of the complex cultural interactions facilitated by the Indian Ocean trade.

#### THE END OF THE PERIOD

Xuanzang's anxieties about the well-being of Buddhist institutions in India were suggested by his premonitory vision of the destruction of Nālandā monastery.<sup>170</sup> His fears were also apparent when he visited the *bodhimanda*, the consecrated area around the sacred *bodhi* tree at Bodh Gayā, for there the Chinese pilgrim saw two statues of Avalokiteśvara and heard a local legend that the law of the Buddha would come to an end when the statues had sunk into the ground and disappeared. Xuanzang noted with alarm that the statue at the southern end had already sunk up to the breast.<sup>171</sup>

While the condition of these two statues in the late twelfth century is not known, it is clear from artistic, inscriptional, textual, and historical evidence that by the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, the prediction had come true, at least in India, where Pāla period culture and Indic Buddhism had virtually ceased to exist. The main reason for this dramatic conclusion to one of ancient India's most brilliant cultural episodes was the advent of Muslims and their conquest of the eastern Gangetic region, although other causes may also have contributed to the untimely closure of this illustrious epoch of South Asian history.

The advent of the Muslims into South Asia began with the Arab conquest of Sind in northwestern India in the eighth century. Usually viewed as a frontier episode rather than a large-scale conquest, the intrusion was offset

somewhat when the ninth-century Hindu Pratihāra dynasty was able to reclaim some of its territories. In the following centuries, however, the Arab world became increasingly strong through trade and missionary activities. In A.D. 1000, Mahmud of Ghazni turned to India, marking a turning point in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Previously adhering to codes of warfare specified in the sacred law books, the *Dharma-sāstras*, Hindu kings were unprepared for the methods of attack used by the Muslims, who were noted for their destruction of religious and civilian centers and for forcible conversions to Islam. Unable to foresee the magnitude of the problem facing them, Hindu kings of north India did not form the coalitions that might have helped them work together to deter the invaders, and one by one their kingdoms fell into Muslim hands.<sup>172</sup> As each area of north India fell to the Muslims, the chances for any of the others to survive the onslaught decreased, for they had fewer allies and their prosperity diminished as ancient trade routes and established alliances were disrupted. By the end of the twelfth century, a vast portion of the northern part of the subcontinent had been overtaken by Muslims, with the Pāla territories awaiting their inevitable fate.

The conquest of Bihar and Bengal, led by Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad Bakhtiyār Khaljī, is recorded in *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*, which provides a Muslim view of the events.<sup>173</sup> Unfortunately, there is no corresponding record of the events preserved in Indic literature, although Tibetan accounts by eyewitnesses who were in the eastern region within a few decades of the events shed light on them as well. Bakhtiyār Khaljī, a Turkish soldier of fortune, apparently made a number of plundering raids into the eastern regions in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. He seized the Uddāṇḍapura monastery and later conquered all of Magadha. He then swiftly proceeded to conquer Bengal by riding on horseback to Nadiā, where King Lakṣmaṇasena of the Sena dynasty was in residence. Accompanied by only eighteen soldiers, Bakhtiyār pretended to be a horse trader, entered the city, and reportedly forced the Hindu king to flee.

Following his conquests in Bengal, Bakhtiyār essentially became an independent king, although some of the eastern Gangetic territories were still not under his subjugation. King Lakṣmaṇasena is believed to have maintained limited sovereignty in eastern Bengal through about 1205, and his successors as well as kings of the Deva dynasty apparently ruled for some time thereafter. Madhusena, a grandson of Lakṣmaṇasena, apparently still controlled some of the territories as late as 1289.

Bakhtiyār established his administration, built a number of mosques and other Muslim structures, demolished many Hindu temples, and made a number of converts to Islam among the Bengali Hindus. From Bengal, the ambitious invader attempted to conquer Tibet by way

of Kāmarūpa, but was unsuccessful. After his death, other Muslim rulers further consolidated Muslim rule in the region.

The conquest of Bihar and Bengal by the Muslims did not represent merely a political domination, for the Muslims brought with them from their western Asiatic homelands a religious and cultural tradition that was not only alien to the Indic way of thinking, but one that was thoroughly incompatible. In particular, two aspects of their religion had devastating effects on Indic culture: first, an abhorrence of idolatry, and second the desire to convert, whether through persuasion or force, followers of other religions, whom the Muslims deemed to be infidels.

The Muslim abhorrence of what they considered to be false idols was manifested in the massive destruction of religious monuments throughout their conquered lands. Muslim texts unapologetically describe such events, for in carrying out such desecrations they believed themselves to be performing holy work. The *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*, for example, relates the story of Bakhtiyār Khaljī's assault on the monastery at Uddāṇḍapura: "It is said by credible persons that he [Bakhtiyār Khaljī] . . . went to the gate of the fort of Bihar [Uddāṇḍapura] with only two hundred horses and began the war by taking the enemy unawares. . . . Mahammed Bukhtyar with great vigour and audacity rushed in at the gate of the fort and gained possession of the place. Great plunder fell into the hands of the victors. Most of the inhabitants of the place were Brāhmaṇas with shaven heads. They were put to death. Large numbers of books were found there, and when the Mahammadans saw them, they called for some person to explain their contents. But all of the men had been killed. It was discovered that the whole fort and city was a place of study (*madrāsā*): in the Hindi language the word Bihar (i.e. *Vihāra*) means a college."<sup>174</sup> When Dharmasvāmin visited the site in about 1234, Uddāṇḍapura had become a Muslim military headquarters.<sup>175</sup>

The damaged faces on so many of the extant Pāla period sculptures also tell the story of the Muslim conquest as eloquently as any eyewitness account. In their religious zeal, the Muslims systematically devivified the Buddhist and Hindu images by defacing them. Unable to realize that these images were tools to enable practitioners to visualize their highest religious goals, such as compassion and wisdom, and were not worshipped as mere idols in the mundane sense, the Muslims attempted to destroy the images. The scars on the images are part of their history and the history of the region where they were created. Their destruction must have been a forceful deterrent to further patronage of artists and religious establishments, thus bringing Pāla period artistic production to an end. Only a handful of sculptures date from the thirteenth century.<sup>176</sup>

By the early thirteenth century, most Buddhist

monasteries were either closed or destroyed, and those that still functioned had only a few monks in residence.<sup>177</sup> Lay practice was probably severely hampered, since Buddhist lay practice and monastic life were inextricably linked. The Hindu way of life continued, but lavish festivals and ceremonies were probably curtailed, along with patronage of artistic productions.

The second factor, the Muslim emphasis upon conversion, also shaped the regions that came under their sway. Through force, taxation of non-Muslims, and other financial and legal penalties, Buddhists, Hindus, and Jains were pressured to abandon their traditional ways of life, systems of belief, and religious practices. It is likely that the lower strata of society were most profoundly affected, since they were the most vulnerable to the effects of social upheaval. Members of the lowest Hindu castes might have been attracted to the more democratic outlook of the Muslim religion, as well as the favor conversion gained them among their conquerors.

Persecution and the threat of harm also inaugurated an exodus of people from the Indic region. It cannot be determined how many people fled their homelands or whether both Hindus and Buddhists were part of this movement. Buddhist monks, traditionally highly mobile, were probably highly receptive to leaving the Indic region for other Buddhist lands, where they found welcoming hosts as a result of the earlier transmission of their religions. On the other hand, Hindus, who had not seeded foreign lands with their way of life, were probably more reluctant to leave. A Tibetan account of the situation in Bengal at the time of the Muslim penetration reports that, after the destruction of Uddāṇḍapura and Vikramaśīla during the reign of King Lakṣmaṇasena, Buddhist monks fled to a variety of places within India, such as Orissa, and to Arakan (Burma), Munad (Kampuchea), and elsewhere. Then, the text notes, "Buddhism came to an end in Magadha."<sup>178</sup>

Unlike the Hindus and Buddhists, who spread their ways of life to Southeast Asia, Tibet, China, and Nepal peacefully and at the solicitation of the peoples of those lands, the Muslim presence was uninvited in South Asia and unwelcomed by most of the people they conquered. Intolerant of the Hindu and Buddhist religions and their artistic expressions, the Muslims actively sought to destroy the Indian ways of life. The vast differences between the two worlds of the indigenous Indic society and the Muslim conquerors have never fully been reconciled; the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 into one Muslim and one pluralistic but mostly Hindu nation was a recent manifestation of the incompatibility of these clashing world views.

In trying to understand the disappearance of Pāla culture, scholars have also attempted to identify internal reasons. One suggestion that was made several decades

ago and periodically is repeated is that the presence of tantric cults within the religions of the time caused their downfall. This argument is based on a misunderstanding of tantrism as a corrupt form of religion that is indicative of general moral decay. Such a viewpoint arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, partly out of Victorian era sensibilities. If tantrism were indeed the root of societal decay, the longevity of the peace-loving cultures of Tibet and Nepal would be difficult to explain. Further, some of the surviving religions in India incorporated tantric elements from the Pāla traditions and were thereby enriched and revitalized.

The quality of the Pāla artistic productions of the twelfth century eloquently attests that the society was not experiencing internal decay, for artists continued to produce religious images of great beauty, refinement, and power at that time. The tragedy of the premature demise of the Pāla artistic tradition was only mitigated by the fact that its seeds had been planted abroad and that its descendants survived in the religious and artistic traditions of Southeast Asia, Nepal, Tibet, and China. That the late Pāla style generated some of Asia's richest and most profound artistic creations is proof alone of its brilliance.

1. The term "ancient India" is used to refer to the South Asian region while avoiding confusion with the modern nation of India alone. "Ancient India" refers to South Asia prior to its partition into the countries of Pakistan and India in 1947.
2. The *bhukti* was the largest administrative unit of ancient times and was smaller than the modern states of India. In turn, *bhuktis* were divided into *viṣayas* that were further subdivided into *maṇḍalas*. See Frederick M. Asher, *The Art of Eastern India, 300-800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1980), 107 n. 13. Magadhabhukti was sometimes called Śrīnagarabhukti (Illustrious City), in reference to the city of Pāṭaliputra within its bounds.
3. A number of district names in Bihar were changed in the 1970s; the new names are used in this catalogue. Unfortunately, the changes in the district names could not be incorporated in Susan L. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, Studies in South Asian Culture, vol. 10 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984), which has been used as a guide for the dating and stylistic attributions of this catalogue. The author regrets any confusion this discrepancy may cause. For a detailed map of artistic sites in Bihar, West Bengal, and Bangladesh, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*.
4. Subsequent to the 1947 partition of the subcontinent into the nations of India and Pakistan (including West Pakistan and East Pakistan), Pakistan was bifurcated into Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1971.
5. See Puspa Niyogi, *Brahmanic Settlements in Different Subdivisions of Ancient Bengal* (Calcutta: Indian Studies, Past and Present, 1967), 43-46. While inscriptions do not specify the original homelands of the imported individuals, land-grants from the Pāla period show clear connections to central (and even western) India. Based on the importance of family lineage among the *brāhmanas*, it may be assumed that new individuals were members of already well established groups and came from regions that already had ties to the east. The land-grant inscriptions recording incentives for *brāhmanas* to migrate to the Bengal region are published in Barrie M. Morrison, *Political Centers and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal*, Association for Asian Studies: Monographs and Papers, no. 25 (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press for the Association for Asian Studies, 1970), 157-170.
6. Samuel Beal, *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang by the Shaman Hwui Li* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911; 2nd ed., New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1973), 154-155.
7. The term *mātsyānyāya* is used conventionally in Indic texts and inscriptions to describe periods of political anarchy and is not unique to the Pāla situation. However, because the term so aptly pertained to the situation in the eastern Gangetic region prior to the Pāla ascension, it may have been



- selected deliberately as a metaphor.
8. Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, trans., *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, ed. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970), 257-258.
9. F. Kielhorn, "Khalimpur Plate of Dharmapaladeva," *Epigraphia Indica* 4 (1896-1897): 243-254, espec. p. 251, verse 4.
10. *Tāmra* means "copper" and *śāsana* refers to a charter, implicitly a royal charter (*rāja śāsana*). Ancient Indian *rāja śāsana*s are generally of three types: *dāna śāsana*, which record royal gifts; *prāsāda śāsana*, which record various kinds of royal favor; and *jaya patra*, declaring the victory of one of the parties in a dispute. The vast majority of ancient Indian copperplates, including the Pāla examples, are of the *dāna śāsana* type. See D. C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), 102.
11. For extensive discussion of copperplates, see Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, 103-160.
12. Susan L. Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage* (M.A. thesis, The Ohio State University, 1975), 5.
13. See cat. no. 1 for discussion and translation.
14. For a detailed study of the inscribed, dated sculptures of the Pāla and related periods, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, chap. 3, 27-80, and Appendix of Inscribed Dated Sculptures, 203-250.
15. This methodology, in which images are assigned dates based on the paleography of their inscriptions, was used by Rakhal Das Banerji in his *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series 47 (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933).
16. Alexander Cunningham, *Mahabodhi or the Great Buddhist Temple under the Bodhi Tree at Buddha-Gaya* (London: W. H. Allen, 1892; reprint, Varanasi: Indological Book House, n.d.), 69-71. Also reproduced in S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 246-249. For some of the inscriptions left at Bodhi Gayā by foreign visitors, see Cunningham, *Mahabodhi*, 67-77.
17. See Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal* (Calcutta: G. Bharadwaj and Co., 1971), 355-391, for an overview of the literature of Bengal. Portions of the summary included here have been drawn from Susan L. Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 7-9.
18. K. P. Jayaswal, *An Imperial History of India in a Sanskrit Text* (Lahore, 1934), 3.
19. D. H. H. Ingalls, trans., *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry, Vidyākara's Subhāṣitaratnakosa*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 44 (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1965), 30.
20. Haraprasad Sastri, ed., *Rāmācaritam of Sandhyākaranandin*, Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. 3, no. 1 (Calcutta, 1910; revised with English translation and notes by Radhagovinda Basak, Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1969); R. C. Majumdar, Radhagovinda Basak, and Nanigopal Banerji, eds. and trans., *The Rāmācaritam of Sandhyākaranandin* (Rajshahi: Varendra Research Society, 1939). Important historical information is contained in this text, although because of its eulogistic style and the use of the *śleṣa* (double entendre) poetic technique, much of it is difficult to decipher. A partial commentary that may have been appended to the text shortly after it was composed elucidates some of the contents.
21. For a translation, see Alaka Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet* (Calcutta: Indian Studies, Past and Present, 1967), 520-524.
22. Regarding the statement that the *Gitagovinda* is the earliest work in which all ten incarnations are listed, see A. K. Majumdar, *Caitanya, His Life and Doctrine: A Study in Vaiṣṇavism* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969), 77. For an excellent, recent translation of the *Gitagovinda*, see Barbara Stoler Miller, ed. and trans., *Love Song of the Dark Lord, Jayadeva's Gitagovinda* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), espec. 70-71, for the verses enumerating the ten incarnations.
23. Sukumar Sen, "The 'Sekhsubhodaya': A Mediaeval Romance and Collection of Tales from Bengal, Written in Corrupt Sanskrit," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Fourth Indian Oriental Conference, Allahabad University*, November 5, 6, 7, 1926, 2 vols. (Allahabad: India Press, 1927-30), vol. 2, 516-517.
24. George N. Roerich, trans., *Biography of Dharmasvāmin (Chag lo tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal)*, *A Tibetan Monk Pilgrim* (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1959).
25. For an explanation of how this biography was compiled, see S. C. Das, "Indian Pandits in Tibet," *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1893), 7. The relevant passage is also quoted in Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet*, 28.
26. E. Obermiller, trans., *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung)* by Bu-ston. Part 1 *The Jewels of Scripture*. Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismus, ed. M. Walleiser (Heidelberg: Otto Harrassowitz, 1931), Part 2 *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (Heidelberg: Otto Harrassowitz, 1932); reprint, 2 vols. in 1, Suzuki Research Foundation, Reprint Series 5, n.p., n.d. Leaves from a manuscript once in the personal possession of Bu ston are included in this exhibition (cat. no. 58).
27. George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), vol. 2 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1953); reprint, 2 vols. in 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979).
28. David Templeman, trans. and ed., *Tāranātha's Bka' Babs. Bdun. Ldan. The Seven Instruction Lineages by Jo.Nang. Tāranātha* (New Delhi: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, 1983).
29. Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, trans., *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*.
30. Sarat Chandra Das, ed., *Pag Sam Jon Zang* (Pt. I: *History of the Rise, Progress and Downfall of Buddhism in India*, and Pt. II: *History of Tibet from Early Times to 1745 A.D.*, by Sumpa Khan-po Yece Pal Jor, the great historiographer and chronologist of Tibet), 2 pts. in 1 (Calcutta: Presidency Jail Press, 1908).
31. See James B. Robinson, trans., *Buddha's Lions: The Lives of the Eighty-four Siddhas. Caturāṣṭisiddhapravṛtti by Abhayadatta*. Translated into Tibetan as *Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyus* by sMon grub Shes rab (Berkeley, Calif.: Dharma Publishing, 1979).
32. H. A. Giles, trans., *The Travels of Fa-hsien (399-414 A.D.)*, or *Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956).
33. J. Takakusu, trans., *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671-695)* by I-Tsing (London: Clarendon Press, 1896; reprint, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1966). Yijing sent home to Chang'an another work that he wrote in which he gave accounts of fifty-one pilgrims, including himself, who had gone to India for pilgrimage and study since the beginning of the Tang dynasty. Most were Chinese, but they included Koreans and Indonesians. See Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Their Contribution to Indian Culture* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1962), 296. The work was not yet translated at the time Dutt wrote (Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 296 n. 5).
34. Samuel Beal, trans., *Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from the Chinese of Hsuen Tsiang*, 2 vols. (London: Trubner and Co., 1884; reprint, Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1969); Thomas A. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and S. W. Bushell (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1904-1905; reprint, Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1961).
35. Sylvain Lévi, "L'itinéraire d'Ou-K'ong (751-790)," *Journal Asiatique* 147 (1895): 341-384.
36. H. G. Raverty, trans., *Tabakāt-i-Nāṣiri: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan; from A.H. 194 (810 A.D.) to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.) and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam by Maulānā, Minhāj-ud-dīn, Abū-'Umar-i-'Uṣmān* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1881; reprint, 2 vols., New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1970).
37. R. C. Majumdar, gen. ed., *The Delhi Sultanate*, vol. 6 of *History and Culture of the Indian People* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1960), 7.
38. Amitava Bhattacharya, "A Note on King Mahendrapāla of the Jagajjibanpur copper plate inscription," *Asiatic Society Monthly Bulletin* 18, no. 4 (April 1989), 1-3; Gouriswar Bhattacharya, "The New Pāla Ruler Mahendrapāla: Discovery of a Valuable Charter," *South Asian Studies* 4 (1988), 71-73. The plate, which dates from the seventh year of Mahendrapāla's reign, is presently housed at the Malda Museum.
39. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 240-242 and figs. 38-42, for the images and their inscriptions.
40. In general, it has been accepted that the Pratiharas under Mahendrapāla assumed control of Nārāyaṇapāla's holdings in Bihar. The idea that the Pālas experienced substantial loss of territory after the reign of King Devapāla now needs revision.
41. Dates given in S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, need to be adjusted accordingly; all images after the reign of King Devapāla should be dated approximately fifteen years later than published therein. Suggested dates for images in this exhibition have been adjusted to compensate for this approximately fifteen-year difference.
42. Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 95-96. Buchanan's conclusion that the Pāla dynasty was not a stronghold of Buddhism needs to be modified slightly. Although the religious leanings of the dynasty were not exclusively Buddhist and may not have been a major factor in the thriving Buddhist culture of the Pāla kingdom, the region itself was a Buddhist stronghold, as is evidenced by artistic and historical sources.
43. In light of the conflicting evidence about the Pālas as enthusiastic and exclusive patrons of Buddhism presented by Buchanan in her excellent work, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, it is difficult to explain the unequivocal way in which the kings are praised by the Tibetan historians as Buddhist devotees. Buchanan notes that the literary works of Tāranātha and Sum pa mkhan po of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries list sixteen Pāla kings, of which only six correspond to historical rulers named in Pāla copperplates. (Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 94-95.) Thus, acts of Buddhist devotion are attributed to twelve "bogus" Pāla kings and to six identifiable Pāla kings, and even the six historical kings are not placed correctly in their dynastic sequence. This suggests that the Tibetans were in active contact with the Pāla region only during certain periods of Pāla history, probably corresponding to times during or shortly after the reigns of the six "real" kings mentioned in their histories: Gopāla (I), Dharmapāla,

- Devapāla, Mahipāla (I), Nayapāla, and Rāmapāla, and that their information about other phases of Pāla history was secondhand or otherwise limited. Buchanan also notes (pp. 66-67) that later Tibetan Buddhist historians give accounts of a complete lineage of Pāla rulers, all of whom are described as supporters of Buddhism, but most of whom cannot be identified. Mahipāla (I) is the first of the kings known through inscriptions to be mentioned after Gopāla, Dharmapāla, and Devapāla. Mahipāla apparently was not a Buddhist, but he and his son Nayapāla may have been known to the Tibetans because they were contemporaries of the Indian teacher Atiśa, who was responsible for a revival of Buddhism in Tibet and the resultant renewed contact between Tibet and monasteries within the Pāla domain. Buchanan suggests that the reason Gopāla, Dharmapāla, and Devapāla were known in the Tibetan histories is not so much because of their contributions to Buddhism but because Buddhism was first introduced to Tibet from eastern India by Śāntirakṣita, Padmasambhava, Kamalaśīla, and others during their reigns. She reasons that the Pāla kingdom was apparently strongest during the reigns of kings Gopāla, Dharmapāla, and Devapāla, as well as Mahipāla and Nayapāla and later Rāmapāla, and it may have been safest for foreigners to travel to their region then.
44. S. Huntington, "The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture, 62.
  45. S. Huntington, "The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture, 62-64 and figs. 64-67.
  46. Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, 199 and 213 n. 2.
  47. For further information regarding the relations between the Bengal region and Myanmar (Burma), see Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, 279-280.
  48. For discussion of the Sena dynasty, see Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, 218-285.
  49. See Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, 275-285.
  50. S. Huntington, "The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture, 77 and fig. 82.
  51. Rājendra's empire was probably the most extensive Hindu state of the period. He is noted for having sent embassies to China in 1016 and 1033 and for his victorious campaign into northern India. See Susan L. Huntington with contributions by John C. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India* (Tokyo and New York: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1985), 529. Although his overt motive for his expedition to north India was to bring the holy Ganges water back to the Cōla lands, he must have had military goals in mind as well. Assuming that the Senas were from Karnataka, it still remains to be explained why they would have been part of Rājendra's entourage and why they might have remained in Bengal.
  52. See Robinson, trans., *Buddha's Lions: The Lives of the Eighty-four Siddhas*.
  53. This summary of Tantric Buddhism was provided by Miranda Shaw.
  54. The terms Hinayāna and Theravāda are often used to describe this form of Buddhism. However, neither term is truly accurate.
  55. See Roerich, *Biography of Dharmasvāmin*, 73-74, for an account of Dharmasvāmin's encounter with a Theravāda śrāvaka.
  56. See the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta* in T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Buddhist Suttas*, vol. 11 of *Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968), 93.
  57. Two replicas were created in Myanmar, two in Thailand, and one in Nepal. In addition, there are two known models of the Mahābodhi Temple in Tibet. See the following articles in Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment* (Bombay: Marg, 1988): Robert L. Brown, "Bodhgaya and Southeast Asia," 101-124; Mary Shepherd Slusser, "Bodhgaya and Nepal," 125-142; and Jane Casey Singer, "Bodhgaya and Tibet," 143-155. See also Southeast Asia section of this catalogue.
  58. For a study of the cult of the relics in ancient India and the pilgrimage associated with the cult, see Nancy E. Falk, *The Study of Cult: With Special Reference to the Cult of the Buddha's Relics in Ancient South Asia* (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1972).
  59. See the series of articles by John C. Huntington, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism," part 1 [Lumbinī and Bodhgaya], *Orientalism* 16, no. 11 (Nov. 1985): 46-61; part 2 [Rājapātana Mrgadāva], *Orientalism* 17, no. 2 (Feb. 1986): 28-43; part 3 [Śrāvastī and Sāṅkasya], *Orientalism* 17, no. 3 (March 1986): 32-46; part 4, *Orientalism* 17, no. 7 (July 1986): 28-40; part 5 [Kūśinagara, Appendices and Notes], *Orientalism* 17, no. 9 (Sept. 1986): 46-58. See also John C. Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image: the Cult of the Aṣṭamahāprāthihārya," part 1, *Orientalism* 18, no. 4 (April 1987): 55-63; part 2, *Orientalism* 18, no. 8 (Aug. 1987): 56-68.
  60. *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, in Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 90.
  61. Only one example of this subject from the Pāla period is known to me. The piece, in the collection of the Elvehjem Museum at the University of Wisconsin, was originally scheduled to be included in this exhibition. See Susan L. Huntington, "An Unusual Image from the Pāla Period Showing the Buddha Converting the Robber Aṅgulimāla," in *Shri Krishna Deva Commemoration Volume*, ed. Chitta Ranjan Prasad Sinha (forthcoming); Janice Leoshko, "Pāla-Period Indian Art in the Elvehjem's Collection," *Elvehjem Museum of Art, Bulletin/Annual Report 1986-87* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1987), 32-37; Debjani and Prangopal Paul, "Just the One Finger Yet: A Rare Representation of Aṅgulimāla in Pāla Art," in Debala Mitra and Gouriswar Bhattacharya, eds. *Nalinikānta Śatavārsikī: Dr. N. K. Bhattachali Centenary Volume (1888-1988), Studies in Art and Archaeology of Bihar-Bengal*, Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series, no. 83 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989): 35-39.
  62. There are ex post facto explanations and descriptions of the eight events (see Appendix I), but the question of the origin and history of the group remains unexplained.
  63. In contrast, during the Gupta period Śārnāth apparently was preeminent. This may be inferred from the overwhelming popularity of Gupta period artistic depictions of the Buddha in the teaching gesture that is symbolic of the first sermon that occurred at that site.
  64. Discussed below.
  65. D. R. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar* (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1963), 301.
  66. Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, *Tārānātha's History of Buddhism in India*, 101.
  67. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 340.
  68. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*, 301. For an overview of Nālandā and its history, see Dutt, *Monks and Monasteries of India*, 328-348.
  69. S. Huntington, "The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture, 108-116, 134-141.
  70. For an overview see, S. Huntington, "The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture, 108-109.
  71. Hirananda Sastri, "The Nālandā Copper-plate of Devapaladeva," *Epigraphia Indica* 17 (1923-1924): 310-327.
  72. Stylistic connections between the art of Java and eastern Bengal are also notable, although inscriptional records do not document this latter association.
  73. Nālandā is usually assumed to have been destroyed around the same time that Uddānapura was destroyed, in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. See below.
  74. E. Obermiller, trans., *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung) by Bu-ston. Part II The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, 157.
  75. S. Huntington, "The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture, figs. 34, 35, 39, and 43; fig. 38 also might be from Bihār Sharīf.
  76. Frederick M. Asher was able to reconstruct a great deal of information about some of the images. See Frederick M. Asher, "The Former Broadley Collection, Bihar Sharīf," *Artibus Asiae* 32, nos. 2-3 (1970): 105-124.
  77. See below.
  78. Roerich, *Biography of Dharmasvāmin*, 91.
  79. The site was first excavated over nine seasons by an archaeological team from Patna University. The preliminary reports of their findings were published in *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1960-1961 through 1968-1969. Subsequently the Archaeological Survey of India continued the excavations; for their reports, see *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1971-1972ff. There has been considerable debate regarding whether Antichak really represents Vikramaśīla monastery. See Ram Charitra Prasad Singh, "Antichak, the Seat of Vikramaśīla University," *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* 46, nos. 1-4 (1960): 135-138; Frederick M. Asher, "Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra," *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā* 1, no. 2 (July 1975): 107-113; and Bhagwati Sharan Verma, "Excavation at Antichak," *Journal of the Bihar Purāvīd Parishad* 1 (1977): 192-201.
  80. Susan L. Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 29.
  81. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 369. The reference in Dutt is part of an excerpt from Brontōn's "Life of Atiśa."
  82. Majumdar, Basak, and Banerji, *The Rāmācārīyam of Sandhyākaranandin*, 82. Also cited in Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 377.
  83. Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, vol. 1, 214-221.
  84. Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671-695) by I-Tsing*, 181.
  85. For a recent study of Gayā, see Frederick M. Asher, "Gayā: Monuments of the Pilgrimage Town," in Janice Leoshko, ed. *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment*, 73-88.
  86. Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 292, 641 n. 1.
  87. See George Michell, ed., *Brick Temples of Bengal, From the Archives of David McCutcheon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).
  88. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 313.
  89. See S. Huntington, "The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture, Appendix of Inscribed Dated Sculptures, 202-250 for seventy-seven of them. Claudine Bautze-Picron has further identified the image listed as no. 54 in that Appendix. See Claudine Bautze-Picron, "The Lost (?) Pedestal from Madanapāla's Reign, Year 14," *South Asian Studies* 4 (1988): 75-81. For the seventy-eighth inscribed, dated image, see Gouriswar Bhattacharya, "A Second Dated Tārā Image of the Reign of Devapāla," *Indian Museum Bulletin* 17 (1982): 21-23. This image was not known to me at the time the *The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture* was published.
  90. See the methodology used in S. Huntington, *The 'Pala-Sena' Schools of Sculpture*.
  91. Two researchers, Frederick M. Asher and Richard Newman, have begun to examine the question of stone types used in Pāla period art. See Frederick M. Asher, "Eastern Indian Sculptures: A Preliminary Analysis of Stone Materials," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 14 (1987), 235-241; Richard

- Newman and Eugene Farrell, "The Materials of Indian Stone Sculpture," in Jane Anne Casey, ed., *Medieval Sculpture from Eastern India: Selections from the Nalin Collection* (Livingston, New Jersey: Nalini International Publications, 1985), 95-101; Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), chap. 7 on eastern India. Asher bases his work on stone samples from pieces with known provenances and from samples taken from quarry sites. Newman's samples were drawn from pieces with suggested, but not, definitive provenances, and from published geological reports regarding quarry sites rather than actual stone samples.
92. Asher, "Eastern Indian Sculptures," 236.
  93. Asher, "Eastern Indian Sculptures," 238.
  94. Newman and Farrell, "The Materials of Indian Stone Sculpture," 99.
  95. Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India*, 34.
  96. For a study of the Nālandā metal images, see B. B. Lal, "An Examination of Some Metal Images from Nālandā," *Ancient India* 12 (1956): 53-57; for the Kurkihār finds, see K. P. Jayaswal, "Metal Images of Kurkihār Monastery," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* 2 (1934): 71; also see Bhagwant Sahai, "The Metallic Composition of the Bronzes from Bihar," *Journal of the Bihar Purāvid Parishad* 1 (1977): 231-240; Leon P. Stodulski, "Metal Composition of Eastern Indian Sculpture in the Nalin Collection," in Casey, *Medieval Sculpture from Eastern India*: 102-105. In spite of these scientific studies of the alloys used in metal images of the region, no study has been comprehensive enough to permit generalizations to be made about the schools of sculpture. An outstanding study of the composition of metal images of the western Tibet and Kashmir regions done by Chandra L. Reedy of the University of Delaware has indicated that questions of provenance and dating can be correlated with metal composition in western Tibet, suggesting fruitful areas of research for the eastern materials. See Chandra L. Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes—Using Technical Analysis to Determine Regional Origins* (Pasadena and London: Pacific Asia Museum and Robert G. Sawers, in press).
  97. Sahai, "The Metallic Composition of the Bronzes from Bihar," 240.
  98. See cat. no. 1 for discussion and references.
  99. For example, see Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 3 vols. (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949), vol. 1, 172, figs. 1-2; 206, fig. 85.
  100. For discussion of the stylistic evolution as known from surviving works of art, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*.
  101. For a thorough study of the pre-Pāla period remains of eastern India and Bangladesh, see Asher, *The Art of Eastern India*, 300-800.
  102. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 16-17 and fig. 9.
  103. For discussion, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 87, 89, 91, and 107.
  104. Redistricting of Bihar occurred after S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, had been written. It was possible to add the new district names to the large map in that book, but the schools defined in the text follow the old district names. This catalogue uses the new district names. It is notable that Pāla inscriptions reveal that the Magadha region was subdivided into *viṣayas* corresponding to the northern Magadha and southern Magadha divisions adopted here (Gayā-*viṣaya* around Gayā in southern Magadha and Rājagṛha-*viṣaya* centering on Rājagṛha [near Nālandā] in northern Magadha). See D. C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), 249.
  105. The clustering of sites according to southern and northern Magadhan styles was not done in S. Huntington, *The "Pāla Sena" Schools of Sculpture*. That book holds that dominant sites in various regions played a leadership role and influenced the sites nearby. This catalogue describes the stylistic phenomena more broadly as northern Magadhan and southern Magadhan.
  106. Followers of the father were known as the Eastern School (presumably Bengal), while the followers of the son were known as the Madhyadeśa school, which is believed to correspond with south central Bihar, that is, Magadha. See Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, *Taranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, 349.
  107. For example, the stone lintel dated in the reign of King Dharmapāla mentions the name of a sculptor, although the name has been read variously as Śāyanabhara and Ujjala. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 205-206.
  108. For an example, see Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, fig. 18.24.
  109. See Birendra Nath, *Nalanda Murals* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1983).
  110. See Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, pls. 25-26, for discussion of these paintings as reflecting the Pāla style.
  111. Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. 1, 203 fig. 78.
  112. Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, pl. 17.
  113. Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, pl. 17.
  114. Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *The Deeds of Harsha (Being a Cultural study of Bāṇa's Harshacharita)* (Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan, 1969), 114-115.
  115. See C. Sivaramamurti, "Sanskrit Sayings Based on Painting," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* 2, no. 2 (Dec. 1934). As cited in R. H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1959), 164.
  116. Translated from the twelfth-century Chinese treatise on painting and painters of the period 1070 to 1160 known as the *Huaji* (*Hua-chi*), which was compiled in 1167 by Deng Chun (Teng Ch'un). See R. H. Van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, 165-166. Van Gulik includes the original Chinese passage in n. 2, p. 166.
  117. Jeremiah P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India* (London: The British Library, 1982), 11.
  118. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 343.
  119. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 237.
  120. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, 1053.
  121. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, 6.
  122. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, 7.
  123. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, 13.
  124. The color associations are known across Asia and are presumably based on Indic sources. A common color system is that *om* is white, *ma* is blue, *pi* is yellow, *pad* is green, *me* is red, and *hūm* is black. See Gösta Liebert, *Iconographic Dictionary of the Hindu Religions, Buddhism-Hinduism-Jainism. Studies in South Asian Culture*, vol. 5 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 201; E. Dale Saunders, *Mudrā: A Study of Symbolic Gestures in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture*, Bollingen Series, no. 58 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), 23. For a variant scheme, see Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* (London: Rider and Co., 1960; paperback edition, 1969), 252-257.
  125. See Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum* (Dacca: Dacca Museum Committee, 1929), 12-14, pls. 1 and 2.
  126. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, 20, says that the most common cycle in Buddhist manuscripts consists of eighteen paintings arranged in groups of six, with three per side, at the beginning, middle, and end of the Prajñāpāramitā manuscripts.
  127. See Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, Mainly Based on the Sādhana-mālā and Cognate Tantric Texts of Ritual*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968); Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, ed. *Sādhana-mālā*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1968).
  128. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, ed., *Nispannayogāvalī of Mahāpaṇḍita Abhayākara-gupta* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1949).
  129. See cat. nos. 13-15 for discussion.
  130. See Appendix I and n. 59 above for articles by John C. Huntington on this subject.
  131. For Buddha life scenes at Sārnāth, see Joanna G. Williams, "Sārnāth Gupta Steles of the Buddha's Life," *Ars Orientalis* 10 (1975): 171-192.
  132. The most elaborate Pāla depiction of the events occurs in a large stone stele now enshrined at the village of Jagdiśpur in the vicinity of Nālandā monastery. The piece has been published a number of times. For a detailed analysis of this piece, see John C. Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image: The Cult of the Aṣṭamahāprāthihārya," part 2.
  133. T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Buddhist Birth Stories or Jātaka Tales* (London: Tribner and Co., 1880; reprint ed. New York: Arno Press, 1977), 96.
  134. E. H. Johnston, trans., *The Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha* (Lahore, 1936; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972), 201.
  135. Religiously, the Marāvijaya can be defined as the moment at which the attainment of Buddhahood is assured. As the supreme Bodhisattva—that is, the highest level of Bodhisattvahood just prior to Buddhahood, this image represented the ideal *cakravartin*/Bodhisattva king. The gesture of calling the earth to witness may have served to express the concept of the earthly domain of the king as well as the imminent victory of the Buddha-to-be.
  136. The Khālimpur copperplate records a grant for a Hindu temple, not a Buddhist institution, and Dharmapāla merely sanctioned the grant, which was actually made by one of his officials.
  137. Kielhorn, "Khalimpur Plate of Dharmapaladeva," 251.
  138. Judging from his father's name (Gopāla, meaning "Protector of Cows," suggesting Vaiṣṇava leanings) and the names of his grandfather and great grandfather, he came from an essentially Hindu, Vaiṣṇava lineage. Dharmapāla's adoption of Buddhism therefore may have arisen from sincere religious belief (and/or political expediency). His name means protector of Dharma. Dharmapāla also called himself *paramasaugata* (supreme follower of Sugata [Well-gone one], that is, the Buddha). Other evidence, such as later historical sources, indicate that he was a Buddhist, and therefore the selection of these words may have arisen out of his sincere personal inclinations. Dharmapāla also used a seal decorated with his name and the Buddhist *dharmacakra* emblem on his copperplates. Because this emblem also was used on the seals of Buddhist monasteries, such as Nālandā, and earlier on royal seal of kings of the Deva dynasty (who are likely to have been direct predecessors of the Pālas) of eastern Bengal in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, Dharmapāla may have been adopting an already authoritative symbol. Since all later Pālas used this seal and the



- title *paramasaugata*, but their acceptance of Buddhism was not always complete, it may be suggested that it became a symbol of dynastic authority. See Susan L. Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 16-19.
139. Verse 12 of the Monghyr plate has been translated as follows: "Like Buddha attaining enlightenment, that son (Devapāladeva)—clear in mind, restrained in speech and addicted to pure physical works—attained his father's peaceful kingdom." See R. R. Mukherji and S. K. Maity, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions Bearing on History and Civilization of Bengal* (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1967), 122, verse 12.
  140. Further evidence of the importance of Bodh Gayā to the Pālas comes from another important inscription of Devapāla's reign. Although not an official grant, the stone inscription that was found at Ghosrāwān (seven miles southeast of Bihār Sharif) sheds further light on the importance of the Vajrasana image. Verse 2 says: "reflecting thus did cupid [desire or passion] leave Buddha (sitting on the diamond throne) from a distance; may the prosperous lord, contemplating under the Bodhi-tree protect the entire universe." The last few words, in which the Buddha under the *bodhi* tree is invoked to protect the entire universe, may be especially significant as an auspicious symbol of the period. Verses 8 and 13 also refer to the Vajrasana. See Mukherji and Maity, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, 136-138.
  141. For Mahendrapāla's Jagajjibanpur copperplate, see above. For mention of Śūrapāla's copperplate, which was found in Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh, see Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 43. The plate bears the *dharmacakra* and uses the term *paramasaugata* for Dharmapāla, Devapāla, and Śūrapāla. It may be assumed that it also includes a reference to the Vajrasana.
  142. Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 55.
  143. The verse has been translated as follows: "May the prosperous Lord Buddha, as well as the ruler of the earth Gopala be victorious,—Buddha, carrying with a heart gladdened by highest pity his darling friendliness,—removing the mire of ignorance with clear waters of the river of knowledge of supreme enlightenment and attaining permanent bliss by repelling the aggression of Māra; and Gopala, enjoying great friendly feeling (of his subjects), with a heart full of kindness, washing the dirt of ignorance of his subjects with clear waters of education, imparting true knowledge and establishing permanent peace in the kingdom by removal of anarchy (a state caused by actions of self-willed men)." See Mukherji and Maity, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, 170, verse 1.
  144. Buchanan argues that this was because the formula was a successful solution to the problem of justifying the rule of a branch line. Nārāyaṇapāla needed to emphasize Gopāla, the only ruler from whom he could actually trace his descent, and needed to de-emphasize Śūrapāla, whose heirs might contest the throne. See Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 54-55.
  145. That some kings were not Buddhists has been shown clearly by Buchanan. See Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*.
  146. Buchanan, *A Study of Pāla Patronage*, 54-56.
  147. See note 57.
  148. Exactly which image was in worship during the Pāla period is unknown. The image presently enshrined dates from about the tenth century and may have replaced an earlier image around the tenth century. However, because this image was not *in situ* in the nineteenth century, when scholarly study of Bodh Gayā began, there is some doubt whether it was the main image. As the largest image of the Buddha in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* known from the site, it may well have been the image enshrined during the latter part of the Pāla period, beginning in the tenth century. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 99-100; see also Janice Leoshko, "The Vajrasana Buddha," in Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment*, 40.
  149. Liebert, *Iconographic Dictionary of the Indian Religions*, 307.
  150. For a list of the twenty-four icons and some discussion of them, see T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (Madras: Law Printing House, 1914-1916; reprint, 2 vols. in 4, New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1968), vol. 1, part 1, 227-244.
  151. See Sastri, *Rāmacaritam of Sandhyākaranandin*; and Majumdar, Basak, and Banerji, *The Rāmacaritam of Sandhyākaranandin*.
  152. For discussion and examples of Gaṇeśa at the beginning of iconographic programs, see Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 190-191, 210, 327, 457, and 514.
  153. For an interpretation of the role of this image in the religious message of iconographic programs in Indic art, see Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 191, 298-299, and 327.
  154. For Pāla period examples, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 214 and 230.
  155. F. Kielhorn, "The Mungir Copper-plate Grant of Devapāladeva," *Indian Antiquary* 21 (1892): 253-258; Mukherji and Maity, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, 115.
  156. Moreshwar G. Dikshit, "Some Buddhist Bronzes from Sirpur, Madhya Pradesh," *Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India* 5 (1955-1957): 1-11.
  157. Debala Mitra, *Bronzes from Achutraipur, Orissa* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1978).
  158. See Susan L. Huntington, "Some Aspects of Bengal Stone Sculpture," *Bangladesh Lalit Kālā* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1975): 19-28; S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 178-179.
  159. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 131-132.
  160. See B.N. Mukherjee, *East Indian Art Styles, A Study in Parallel Trends* (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi and Company, 1980), 27.
  161. See cat. nos. 127-130 for discussion.
  162. It is unclear whether the few earlier examples carved in stone, such as the remarkable doorway from the temple at Dah Parbatīyā, near Tezpur, were products of local workshops. It is likely that they were not. For an illustration, see Joanna Gottfried Williams, *Art of Gupta India: Empire and Province* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), fig. 261.
  163. For examples, see Arun Bhattacharjee, *Icons and Sculptures of Early and Medieval Assam* (Delhi: Inter India Publications, 1978), figs. 1, 9-12 (metal images that were found in a hoard), and 81.
  164. Compare with Gordon H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, 3 vols. Artibus Asiae Supplementum 25 (New York: Artibus Asiae, 1970), vol. 3, pls. 294d, 310c, and 320a.
  165. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 3, pls. 323 a-d.
  166. For example, see Parmeshwari Lal Gupta, *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities* (Patna: Patna Museum, 1965), 128-129, nos. 9, 14, 15, 17, 130, no. 21.
  167. For a study of these materials and their place in the history of Buddhism in south India, see T. N. Ramachandran, *The Nāgapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum*, Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, New Series, General Section 7, no. 1 (Madras: Director of Stationary and Printing, Madras, on Behalf of the Government of Madras, 1965).
  168. For the more typically southern style, see Ramachandran, *The Nāgapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum*, pl. 2, fig. 3; pl. 5, figs. 1-4. A few images from Nāgapattinam display the northern manner of wearing the robe as well.
  169. Ramachandran, *The Nāgapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum*, 17. The twenty-first year of the reign of Rājaraṇa I would correspond to about 1006.
  170. Beal, *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang by the Shaman Hwui Li*, 154-155.
  171. Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, vol. 2, 116.
  172. There are records of some attempts by Hindu kings to protect their kingdoms from the Muslims. See Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 207, regarding King Govindacandra of the Gāhaḍvāla dynasty, who levied a tax called *Turaṣka daṇḍa* to meet the cost of warding off the invaders around A.D. 1120.
  173. See Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, 234-236, 254-259.
  174. As related by Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 357-358.
  175. See Roerich, *Biography of Dharmasvāmin*, 93.
  176. The continuation of Hindu artistic activity past the advent of Muslim rule at Gayā has been discussed in Frederick M. Asher, "Gayā: Monuments of the Pilgrimage Town," in Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment* (Bombay: Mārg, 1988): 73-88.
  177. A number of poignant stories about the few monks remaining at various monasteries are related in Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*. See especially 347-348 for the story of a single nonogenarian monk and his disciple at Nālandā.
  178. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 379, citing Sumpa. See Das, *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, 122.



# CATALOGUE OF PĀLA PERIOD OBJECTS

1

## BUDDHA

India, Bihar, Bhagalpur District, Sultāngañj  
Ca. sixth or seventh century, pre-Pāla period  
Grey black stone

H: 23 1/2" (with base pin 27 1/2") W: 8" D: 3 1/2"  
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery  
Brundage Collection (B60 S571)

Although this sculpture was discovered in 1861 amidst the ruins of a Buddhist monastery at Sultāngañj in the Bhagalpur District of Bihar, India, its interesting history has only recently come to light.<sup>1</sup> Unearthed during the course of railway construction rather than scientific archaeological excavation, it was found with one of the most famous and remarkable images of Indic art, the more than life-size metal depiction of a standing Buddha now in the City Museum and Art Gallery in Birmingham, England.<sup>2</sup> Another stone sculpture, now in the British Museum,<sup>3</sup> and several other stone carvings and other antiquities were also discovered in the ruined monastery.<sup>4</sup> The excitement over finding the largest extant metal image from the Indic region must have greatly overshadowed the discovery of the other pieces; some of the less impressive objects apparently were sent to England, but their importance and history were quickly forgotten.<sup>5</sup> Fortunately, the recent rediscovery of both smaller pieces and their acquisition by public collections enables them to take their rightful place as important documents of the artistic traditions of eastern India.

The ancient monastery at Sultāngañj has never been excavated properly, and its original name remains unknown. However, based on the range of dates of objects retrieved from the ruins and the superb quality of the artistic remains, it may be suggested that Sultāngañj was a thriving Buddhist center for five hundred years or more, from about the seventh through the twelfth centuries. Located in the ancient region of Aṅga, it documents the early presence of Buddhist activity there, as well as the existence of a local school of art in the pre-Pāla period.

The metal Buddha, the British Museum piece, and the Asian Art Museum example all belong to the pre-Pāla period. Recent scientific analysis of the core of the metal

piece has confirmed a date around the seventh century for its manufacture; the British Museum piece has several features, including the decorated backslab, suggesting that it also was made around the seventh century. The style of the Asian Art Museum image illustrated here is so striking in its resemblance to late fifth-century works from the Gupta period that initially it appears to predate its two cohorts. In particular, it resembles late fifth-century sculptures from the famous Buddhist monastery at Sārnāth. However, the paleography of the two inscriptions on the piece has been assigned to the sixth or seventh century, suggesting that it was carved around that time. It may be suggested that, in spite of its close resemblance to Gupta period works from Sārnāth, the sculpture reflects a slightly later eastern Indian idiom. Sārnāth was one of the premier artistic sites of the Gupta period, and it is well accepted that the early artistic traditions of the eastern Gangetic region looked to Sārnāth for artistic inspiration. Since the image is carved out of the dark greyish black stone used in the eastern region, but never at Sārnāth, it is unquestionably a product of local manufacture rather than one that might have been imported. Therefore, it may be suggested that the piece dates from the sixth or seventh century, and while it is based upon the model of Buddhist art at Sārnāth, it documents the pre-Pāla tradition in the east.

The characteristic stylistic features shared with the Sārnāth idiom include the virtually transparent drapery of the Buddha, which is mainly apparent at the neck, wrists, and hem; his slightly accentuated posture (*ābhaṅga*), with the hip thrust to the right; and the overall simplicity of the composition. The simple beaded rim of the stele is a feature derived from Gupta art. The facial features and curled hair are also closely modeled after Gupta prototypes. In particular, the heavy lower lip and half-closed eyes are features found widely in Gupta period art.

Unlike the tall, slender figures found in the art of Gupta period Sārnāth, this figure is squat in proportions. Whether this reflects an eastern idiom is unknown, since images of this period are so rare that it is difficult to ascertain the existence of a trend. Another feature not found in the art of Sārnāth is the oversized hands, but the significance of this feature is unknown. The body of the Buddha is abstracted and smooth, with little definition of



joints, musculature, or bone structure. The surfaces of the body are subtly modeled and smooth, except for some definition of the nipples and knees.

The simple composition contains only a single figure of a Buddha and a small kneeling devotee. The main figure is easily recognizable as a Buddha, although the limited iconography does not indicate whether it is the historical Buddha Śākyamuni or another Buddha. Features that identify the figure as a Buddha include the simple monk's robe that he wears. Covering both shoulders in the manner popularly seen in Gupta period images, the robe contrasts with the popular Pāla manner of showing Buddhas with one shoulder bare. In keeping with his renunciation of worldly riches, the Buddha wears no jewelry or other ornamentation. The stretched, unadorned earlobes are characteristic of all Buddhas; in representations of Śākyamuni, they recall his princely childhood and the heavy ear ornaments he had worn. Later, when he had adopted the simple garb of a mendicant, the distended earlobes, stretched from the weight of the heavy earrings, served as reminders of the life he had abandoned. In the center of the forehead of the Buddha, an incised circle represents his *ūrṇā*, an auspicious mark found on Buddhas and other exalted beings. The protuberance on top of his head, called an *uṣṇīṣa*, is another auspicious sign particularly indicative of a royal heritage. The hair of the Buddha occurs in rows of small curls, often called snail-shell curls because of their coiled shape. While early Buddha images showed a variety of hair conventions, the rows of curls had become the standard hair motif by the Gupta period and remained so through the Pāla period.

The left hand of the Buddha holds the end of his robe in a gesture that has been standard in Buddhist art since the Kuṣāṇa period, ca. second or third century A.D. His right hand displays the gift-giving gesture, *varada mudrā*, which is characterized by the outward-facing palm with the fingers pointing downward. As if to receive the munificence of the Buddha's gift-giving, the small devotee kneels directly beneath the bestowing hand. Displaying a gesture of respect and salutation in which the two hands are placed palms together at the chest (*añjali mudrā*), this small figure may represent the donor of the image. The inscription beneath him on the pedestal reveals that the image was donated by an individual, but the name is now somewhat indistinct. The human figure is very small in comparison with the Buddha; such hierarchic scaling is invariably used in South Asian art to differentiate between the spiritual achievements of mortals and transcendent beings.

The overall simplicity of the piece characterizes the style of the pre-Pāla period. The backslab is a plain ovoid, with no decoration other than the beaded rim. The pedestal is plain, and the Buddha stands directly on the base of the image, lacking even a lotus pedestal. Increasing elaboration

of both stylistic and iconographic elements in the course of the Pāla period marked a dramatic departure from such works.

On the reverse of the slab, there is an incised outline drawing of a *stūpa* and an inscription. The inscription, which is translated below, records an invocation that is generally referred to as the "Buddhist creed." Although it does state one of the Buddha's central teachings, namely, that all things come into existence through causes and conditions and by the same token will pass away, its function here is not to instruct the devotee in the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence. Rather, it is placed on the image to invoke the presence, or vivifying energy, of the Dharma, the universal truth taught and embodied by the Buddha, in the image. Thus, it functions here as a consecratory formula rather than a creedal statement.<sup>6</sup> This text, with minor variations, appears with great frequency on the Buddhist images of the Pāla period.

#### Inscriptions:<sup>7</sup>

Language: Sanskrit, influenced by local dialect

Script: Siddhamātrkā of about the seventh century

#### Inscription on back beneath *stūpa*:

1. *Y(e) dhammā hetuprabhavavā hetun te*
2. *shām tathāgato hyvadat teshām*
3. *cha yo nirodho evaṁvādī*
4. *mahā-sramaṇaḥ*

Translation: All those phenomena which are born of causes, *Tathāgata* (that is, the Buddha) spoke indeed of all those causes; and their cessation [was also preached by him]. The Great Monk is the propounder of this doctrine.

#### Inscription on pedestal on front of image:

1. *Deyadharmmoyam śrī Nukikyoḥ (or Nukikpoḥ) Kirada Ka(ratī)*
2. *pitṭyāvaye pāvyānām mahotrara jñānābāpta(ye)*
3. *Sarvasattānām*

The text may be Sanskritized as follows:

1. *Deyadharmmoyam śrī-Nukikyaḥ (or Nukikpaḥ) Karatī*
2. *Pitṭyavāye pārvānām mahottara-jñānavāptaya*
3. *sarvasattvānām [cha]*

Translation: Illustrious Nukikya (or Nukikpa), the Kirāta, is doing (making) this religious gift for attaining superior knowledge of (by) the oblations offered at the new and full moon unto the ancestral arrivals (ancestors) (and) all beings.

#### PUBLISHED:

E. B. Harris, *Description of Buddhist remains discovered at Sooltange* (London, 1864), pl. 1; Rajendralala Mitra, "On the Buddhist Remains of Sultanganj," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 33

(1864), 360-72, espec. 367 and illustration opposite 366; Alexander Cunningham, *Report of a Tour in Bihar and Bengal in 1879-80 from Patna to Sunargaon*, Archaeological Survey of India, Report 15 (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1882; reprint, Delhi and Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1969), 24-31, espec. 27; Wladimir Zwalf, "Background to a Buddha," *The British Museum Society Bulletin* 41 (Nov. 1982): 7-11.

1. The original provenance of the piece was recently confirmed by Dr. Wladimir Zwalf of the British Museum upon his discovery of a photograph showing the piece shortly after it had been found in 1861. The photograph appeared in a previously unnoticed pamphlet by E. B. Harris (*Description of Buddhist remains discovered at Sooltāngunge*, London, 1864, pl. 1), a copy of which is in the British Library. A drawing of the piece in context had also been published by Rajendralala Mitra in 1864, although the drawing is not as accurate for a confirmed identification as is the photograph. See Wladimir Zwalf, "Background to a Buddha," *The British Museum Society Bulletin* 41 (Nov. 1982): 7-11. In a January, 1989, letter to me, Dr. Zwalf credits Mr. Martin Lerner of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for helping him identify one of the pieces in the photograph published by Harris as that in the Asian Art Museum. In Dr. Zwalf's letter to me, he notes that specific features of the San Francisco image corresponding to those of the piece in the photograph leave no doubt that they are one and the same. These include such details as the dimensions measured by proportion; the missing fingers on the right hand; the pinhole (?) above each shoulder, now filled in; the broken tip of the nose, now repaired; the number and relationship of the garment folds between the legs; and details of the inscription on the base. Dr. Zwalf discusses the problems of the Sultāngaṇj materials in greater detail in a forthcoming article to be published by the City Museum and Art Gallery in Birmingham.
2. The metal piece has been published many times. For recent discussions of the over life-size metal sculpture, see Frederick M. Asher, *The Art of Eastern India* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1980), pl. 96 and discussions throughout; S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 152 and fig. 193.
3. Zwalf, "Background to a Buddha" 10. See p. 9 for a photograph of the three pieces together.
4. For other sculptures from Sultāngaṇj, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 155; John Irwin, "Some Unknown Gupta Sculptures from Sultāngaṇj," *Artibus Asiae* 17, no. 1 (1954): 34-38.
5. The large metal Buddha came into the possession of Mr. Samuel Thornton, a Birmingham industrialist, who gave it to the city in 1864. Two sculptural fragments now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London originally also were apparently sent to England at an early date. See John Irwin's article, cited above. The British Museum piece was bought by its previous owner in an antique shop near Birmingham about fifty years ago. The Asian Art Museum piece was acquired in London, confirming the likelihood that it had been sent to England at an early date.
6. Explanation of this vital consecratory formula was provided by Miranda Shaw.
7. Kindly read by Dr. B. N. Mukherjee.

2

## ŚIVA AND PĀRVATĪ, SEATED AND EMBRACING (UMĀ-MAHEŚVARA MŪRTI)

Probably India, Bihar

Ca. seventh century, pre-Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 21" W: 14" D: 6 3/4"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery  
Brundage Collection (B62 S9+)

The god Śiva and his consort Pārvatī appear together in a form (*mūrti*) known as Umā-Maheśvara (Umā with Maheśvara [Śiva]). The epithet Umā evokes Pārvatī's maternal aspect, and indeed depictions of Umā-Maheśvara sometimes depict the couple with one or both of their offspring, the peacock-riding, six-headed Kārttikeya and the elephant-god Gaṇeśa, although the children are absent here. Maheśvara (Great Lord) is one of the common epithets of Śiva. When Śiva and Pārvatī are shown together, she is always placed to his left, except in portrayals of their marriage ceremony, wherein she is on his right. Both Buddhists and Hindus generally associate the left side with female deities or elements and in their iconographic traditions place the female to the left of the male.

In this image, Śiva wraps one arm around his consort and with his other hand affectionately fondles her chin in a gesture characteristic of pre-Pāla and Pāla period depictions of this subject (see also cat. no. 18). In other parts of north India and Nepal, Śiva is often shown caressing her breast with his hand. Śiva sits in a relaxed posture with a trident (*triśūla*), one of his principal symbols, on his right and his vehicle (*vāhana*), the bull Nandi, reclining below. Śiva's erect phallus (*ūrdhvaliṅga*) reflects the romantic, playful mood of the Umā-Maheśvara theme, but also represents the sexual energy that is central to his symbolism. The god wears his hair in his characteristic crown of matted locks (*jaṭāmukuta*), in which appears one of his principal emblems, the crescent moon. The vertical third eye in the center of his forehead is another of his identifying marks. Often associated with serpents and frequently adorned with serpent ornaments, Śiva is here shown with a serpent coiling behind his head.

In her right hand, Pārvatī holds what appears to be a blue lotus. Her scarf billows behind her head in a halolike form. Also characteristic of the eastern Indian mode, Pārvatī is seated upon Śiva's left knee, whereas in other artistic traditions, such as that of Nepal (cat. nos. 96 and 99), she is usually shown seated beside him. The pair enjoys their intimate moment atop a crystalline, conventionalized rock formation that represents their sacred mountain abode, Mount Kailāsa.

Charming, lively sculptures like this, often somewhat crude and awkward in execution, are typical of the Hindu art of the pre-Pāla period in Bihar and Bengal. The full-

bodied figures, rounded and almost childlike in their proportions, probably derive from a central Indian artistic tradition rather than the Sārnāth school that inspired so much of the Buddhist art of the region.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the style of this image may be contrasted with that of the standing Buddha from Sultāngaṇj (cat. no. 1), which is so clearly based on the Sārnāth Gupta model.

The overall simplicity of the image, seen in the detailing of the figures and their ornamentation, the plain treatment of the backslab, and the absence of subsidiary embellishments and details, indicates strong ties to the Gupta tradition. Nonetheless, the work relates to images that can be dated fairly securely to the seventh century.<sup>2</sup> Its original provenance is unknown, but comparability with other pre-Pāla period works from Bihar indicates that it is almost certain to have been made there.

Representations of Umā-Maheśvara from eastern India like this one apparently served as prototypes for depictions of this theme later created in Nepal.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *The Ideal Image: The Gupta Sculptural Tradition and its Influence* (New York: The Asia Society in association with John Weatherhill, Inc., 1978), 114, cat. no. 66; *Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 16.

1. For discussion of the pre-Pāla connections with central Indian art styles, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 22-26.
2. For example, details of the sculpture and the general sculptural conception relate to some of the seventh-century images found at Muṇdeśvari in Rohtas (formerly Shahabad) District, Bihar. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 21-23. The simple necklaces, bodily proportions, soft modeling of the figures, and simplicity of the carvings particularly invite comparison.

most keenly felt, but he is known throughout India. Since he was the focus of his own cult, many temples are dedicated to Sūrya, but the god also appears in conjunction with the major deities of Hinduism, particularly Viṣṇu. As might be expected, Sūrya is an auspicious deity associated with life-giving and life-renewal; he is also believed to drive away sickness and disturbing dreams.

In this image, Sūrya is shown in his typical two-armed form, standing in a frontal pose. His hands hold fully opened lotus blossoms, each of which bears a closed bud above. His costume bears traces of his foreign origin, for he wears boots indicative of his role as a horseman. Sūrya's boots are so unusual in the Indian context, where gods are normally depicted with bare feet, that they have generated a number of legends that are preserved in Indian literature. Some texts admonish artists to refrain from fashioning the feet of the god or risk contracting leprosy. Devotees are also warned not to visualize the feet of the sun god.

As is typical for images of this god, Sūrya wears a crown and jewelry, including earrings, bracelets, and two necklaces, one of which has an unusual pendant. The flat-topped crown is characteristic of seventh-century examples worn by Sūrya, Viṣṇu, and other gods in pre-Pāla art and was later replaced by taller, more ornate, and variously shaped types. Sūrya wears a sword suspended in Scythian fashion on his left, another indication of a western source for his iconography. The sash tied at his waist is a feature seen on a number of pre-Pāla period images of the god.

Sūrya is attended on his right by his scribe, the bearded, potbellied Piṅgala, who holds a pen and ink pot. On Sūrya's left appears the youthful Daṇḍa, whose name means "staff" and who carries a short staff. Both attendants turn toward Sūrya in a lively manner. The halos behind their heads indicate their divine status.

This image relates in style to several seventh-century sculptures found at Āpsādh in Nawada District (formerly Gaya District) of Bihar dating from about the late seventh century,<sup>1</sup> as well as some found at Bargaon village in the vicinity of the Nālandā monastery in Nalanda District (formerly Patna District), hardly twenty miles away.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that a pre-Pāla school of art producing images of this style flourished in northern Magadha, perhaps in a number of separate workshops or even a single workshop producing works for temples within the area. The figures of this style are characterized by their sweet, youthful appearance. This feature is also found in Nepali art of this period and may indicate the existence of collateral developments in the Pāla and Nepali regions. The stocky proportions of the figures also typify this style and much of the other art of the pre-Pāla period. Sūrya's body is taut and shapely, with curvilinear contours of the legs and torso in particular. Also related to images from northern Magadha of this period is the treatment of the rim of the

#### 3

#### SŪRYA, THE SUN GOD

Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha

Ca. seventh century, pre-Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 39 1/2" W: 18" D: 8"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection (B63 S36+)

Sūrya (Sun), the Hindu sun god, is known in ancient Indian literature since Vedic times. Also known as Savitar (Savitṛ) in the *Ṛg Veda*, his name may derive from the Vedic *sur* or *svar*, meaning "to shine." A celestial deity, Sūrya originated outside of India, probably in the Iranian area, but was assimilated into the pre-Hindu and Hindu traditions at an early date. His cult became strongest in western India, where the impact of the Iranian world was



halo, with its incised, flattened floral pattern.

The heritage of the Gupta style is easily seen in this image and indicates the dependence on the Gupta tradition by artists of eastern India in the early formulation of their style. Daṇḍa's coiffure in particular, with its locks of curls, is reminiscent of Gupta prototypes. The clinging garments of the figures further reflect the Gupta idiom.

Although Sūrya stands frontally and his body is unflexed, there is an inherent sense of potential movement and alertness to the figure that enlivens the composition. The scarves streaming out from the sides of his arms evoke the presence of wind and heighten the vitality of the image. Animated compositions like this prevailed in pre-Pāla sculpture, but eventually were replaced by less dynamic configurations in the course of the Pāla period.

#### PUBLISHED:

René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé and Terese Tse, *Indian and South-East Asian Stone Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection* (Pasadena, Calif.: Pasadena Art Museum, 1969), 68-69, no. 29; Antonio T. de Nicolas, *Meditations through the Rg Veda* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala, 1978), cover photo; Frederick M. Asher, *Art of Eastern India, 300-800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), pl. 202; Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, *The Society for Asian Art Newsletter* 23, no. 2 (Dec. 29, 1983), 5; *Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 17.

1. For example see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 94.
2. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 126.

4

#### MAÑJUŚRĪ KUMĀRA

Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha region  
Ca. second half of eighth or early ninth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 24" W: 14 3/4" D: 9"

Honolulu Academy of Arts, Purchase, 1975 (4315.1)

Mañjuśrī, a Bodhisattva whose name is sometimes translated as "pleasing splendor," is the personification of transcendent wisdom (*prajñā*) in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Like other major Bodhisattvas, he appears in a variety of forms and is called by many names and epithets in Buddhist texts, indicating his many qualities and capacities. Commonly, he is referred to as Kumāra (boy or youth) or some variant of that term, and in art he is often shown as a youth, as here. His youthfulness is indicated both by his

appearance and by the two tiger claws on his necklace, for these were protective ornaments worn only by boys in parts of South and Southeast Asia.

In this example, Mañjuśrī sits in *lalitāsana*, a posture of ease in which one leg is folded on the seat and the other hangs down and rests on a lotus pedestal footstool (*karnikā pādapiṭha*). His right hand displays *varada mudrā*, the gesture of gift bestowal, and his left holds the stem of a blue lotus (*nīlotpala* or *nīlapadma*), upon which rests the remains of a book (*pustaka*), specifically a Prajñāpāramitā (Perfection of Wisdom) scripture. In some of his forms, Mañjuśrī sits directly upon a lion, but frequently, as here, lions appear as part of his throne. An unusual feature of this carving is the presence of what appears to be a garland of blue lotuses encircling the head of the Bodhisattva.

The style of the image relates to a number of stone sculptures from the ancient Magadha region of the early Pāla period. In particular, it is similar to images from southern Magadha in what are now Gaya and Nawada districts.

Two Sanskrit inscriptions written in the Siddhamātrkā script of the eighth or early ninth century appear on the piece. The one encircling the head of the Bodhisattva is the vivifying Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1), while the one below his feet records the donor's gift of the image. The placement of the inscriptions reinforces the religious statement of the image, for the prayer is like an aura surrounding the highest portion of the body of the Bodhisattva, while the humble offering of the donor lies as a gift at his feet.

The donative inscription has been read in three ways:

1. *Apyabhayagiri de e dharmmoya yaṃ Īśvarasya* (which should be corrected as *Apyabhayagirau deyadharmoyam*). (At the very [same] Abhayagiri this is the religious gift of Īśvara.)<sup>1</sup>
2. *Ārya(yā)bhayagiri dēva-dharmmō yaṃ Yaśōdharasya*. (This is the pious gift of *aryya* Abhayagiri Yaśōdhara.)<sup>2</sup>
3. *A rya ja ya gi ri va si na \*\*\* ro dharmo yam ya so sha ra sya*. (The religious gift of Yaśodhara, a resident of noble Jayagiri.)<sup>3</sup>

1. Reading by Dr. B. N. Mukherjee.
2. Reading by Dr. S. P. Tewari.
3. On-site reading by R. A. Goonetilaka; provided by the Honolulu Academy of Arts but not edited by the translator before inclusion here.

## MAITREYA BODHISATTVA (TUṢITA MAITREYA)

Probably India, Bihar, Magadha region, possibly  
Kurkihār

Ca. early ninth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 32 1/4" W: 16 13/16" D: 8"

Courtesy of Denver Art Museum, Gift of Irene Littledale  
Downs (1972.59)

This sculpture of Maitreya Bodhisattva exemplifies the simplicity and grace of the early Pāla style. Although the figure is frontal and stands with unbent knees and without flexion, there is little of the stiffness or rigidity seen in later Pāla period images. The smiling face of the Bodhisattva further softens his demeanor.

Maitreya, whose name means "loving," "friendly," or "benevolent," is destined to become the next historical Buddha after Śākyamuni. In some Buddhist traditions, he is considered to be the last in a series of eight such enlightened beings. In art and Buddhist literature, Maitreya may appear in the form of a fully enlightened Buddha or, as here, as a Bodhisattva (Buddha-to-be). In his Bodhisattva form, Maitreya resides in Tuṣita heaven, where he awaits his next rebirth as the next mortal Buddha; as a Buddha, Maitreya will preside over Ketumatī, an earthly paradise where he will preach the Buddhist Dharma.

In early representations of Maitreya as a Bodhisattva, such as those from the Kuṣāṇa period (ca. second and third centuries A.D.),<sup>1</sup> he is generally identifiable by the vase he holds in his left hand. However, by the Pāla period, he came to be identified by the *stūpa* that appears as the central ornament in his headdress and by the *nāgakesara* flower he holds in his left hand. In this example, he also holds a string of recitation beads in his right hand, which at the same time displays the *abhaya mudrā*, the gesture of reassurance. As is typical of Bodhisattvas, who are portrayed as royal princes (*rājakumāra*), Maitreya is adorned with jewelry, including necklaces, armbands, a waistband, and a diadem.

Like many other early Pāla images, this representation is far simpler than works created in the subsequent centuries. Maitreya is accompanied only by two attendants, a dwarf and a kneeling devotee who is perhaps the donor of the image. The lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*) upon which Maitreya stands, though effaced, was probably also much simpler than those seen in later examples.

Although the findspot of this image is unknown, it was certainly made in Magadha, for it relates to a number of images found in the region. In particular, it closely resembles images from Kurkihār, where some of the most spectacular Pāla period finds have been made.<sup>2</sup>

The Sanskrit inscription that encircles the head of

Maitreya is the usual Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1).<sup>3</sup>

1. See Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, fig. 8.15.
2. For example, it strongly resembles a representation of the female Bodhisattva Tārā from Kurkihār. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 113. Not only are the facial types virtually identical, but the treatment of the pearled diadem and bodily proportions are very similar. Although the lotus petals of the pedestal upon which Maitreya stands have been largely obliterated, they seem to have been similar to those of the Tārā image. The greater ornateness of the Tārā sculpture may indicate that it is slightly later in date.
3. Dr. B. N. Mukherjee identifies the script as Siddhamātrkā of the ninth century, which correlates with the present stylistic assessment of the piece.

## 6

## ŚYĀMA TĀRĀ (KHADIRAVANĪ TĀRĀ)

Probably India, Bihar, Magadha region

Ca. ninth century, Pāla period

Grey black schist (scientifically tested)

H: 34" W: 17 3/4" D: 9"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli  
and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates  
Purchase (M.76.2.30)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Tārā means "star" or "constellation," and like the North Star, this goddess serves as a beacon on the path for Buddhist devotees. Her name is also related to the verb *tar*, which in the causative means "to cause to arrive at, to lead over or across, to rescue or save," thus emphasizing Tārā's role as a guide on the Buddhist path. Tārā appears in many forms and holds a variety of attributes. In her Khadiravanī form, Tārā is associated with the Buddha Amoghasiddhi and like him is green (*śyāma*). She has two hands in this form; her right hand displays the gift-bestowing gesture (*varada mudrā*) and her left holds the blue lotus (*nīlotpala*).

She sits in a relaxed posture, with her left leg tucked up on the seat and her right leg pendant in a posture known as *lalitāsana*. Her right foot rests upon a *karṇikā*, a small lotus pedestal that serves as a footstool (*pādapiṭha*). She sits upon a lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*) that rests upon a throne. Two lions support the base of the throne in a Buddhist configuration that was already nearly a millennium old by the time this sculpture was created. A small devotee worships just next to Tārā's pendant leg. Below Tārā's left knee is a corpulent, four-armed goddess who holds a sword and the skin of a flayed elephant.<sup>1</sup>

Two of the Jina Buddhas appear in the upper portion of the stele flanking the head of the central figure. These may be identified as Ratnasambhava, recognized by the gift-bestowing gesture (*varada mudrā*) he displays with his right hand, who appears to the proper right of Tārā,

and Akṣobhya, identified by his display of the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) with his right hand, appearing on Tārā's proper left.

This image is typical of the ninth-century Pāla style, as may be verified by comparison with dated images of the period. For instance, it closely resembles the Tārā image found at Hilsa in Nalanda (formerly Patna) District, which is dated in the twenty-fifth or thirty-fifth regnal year of King Devapāla (reigned ca. 812-850).<sup>2</sup> It is likely that the image was produced in the Magadha region, but because it shares features with images from both northern and southern Magadha, its precise place of manufacture may not be ascertained.<sup>3</sup> Tārā's rounded body and full, hemispherical breasts typify the early Pāla style and may reflect the current standards of female beauty. She is clad in a hip-hugging lower garment and a sash that drapes diagonally across her torso. The cloth of her garments bears an incised floral motif that may reflect textiles of the Pāla period. The goddess is adorned with jewelry befitting a deity, including anklets, bracelets, armlets, necklaces, earrings, a diadem, and a headpiece. Her hair is coiffed in a bun atop her head.

The most unusual feature of this sculpture is the rectilinear shape of the upper portion of the stele. Ninth-century images normally have rounded tops (cat. no. 7), while late Pāla period carvings have pointed tops (cat. no. 36). The reasons for this departure from the norm are unknown. It is possible that the image was created for an already existing niche and was designed to conform to its shape. The border motif is also unusual, consisting of a pattern of two blue lotuses (*nilotpala*) alternating with single, open-blossom white lotuses (*puṇḍarika*). In contrast, more typical border elements in Pāla period sculptures include twisted garlands, beads, and rays of light (*prabhā*), or some combination of these motifs.

The Sanskrit inscription around the head of the goddess records the Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1). The Sanskrit inscription on the pedestal below the figure of the small devotee records the gift of the image, although the name of the donor has been interpreted in several ways.<sup>4</sup> In conformity with the pattern identifiable in Buddhist images in general, the religious inscription is placed at the head of the image while the record of the donor's humble gift is offered at the feet. The location of the small devotee just above the donative inscriptions suggests that the figure may be the donor himself.

#### PUBLISHED:

A. C. Eastman, *Catalogue of the Heeramanek Collection of Early Indian Sculptures, Paintings, Bronzes, and Textiles* (New York: Heeramanek Galleries, 1934), 10, no. 15; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Nasli M. Heeramanek, *Loan Exhibition of Early Indian Sculptures, Paintings, and Bronzes* (New York: College Art Association,

1935), 8, no. 10; [Detroit Institute of Arts], *Buddhist Art* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1942), no. 20; Henry Trubner, *The Art of Greater India* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1950), 27, no. 46; Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia: Its Mythology and Transformations*, 2nd ed., ed. Joseph Campbell, 2 vols. (New York: Bollingen Foundation and Pantheon Books, 1960 [1966]), pl. 382; Diran K. Dohanian, *The Art of India* (Rochester, N.Y.: Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, 1961), no. 24; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 42, no. 30; Alice Heeramanek, *Masterpieces of Indian Sculpture from the Former Collections of Nasli M. Heeramanek* (New York: Privately printed, 1979), no. 117; Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), 34, 68, 88; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2, 700-1800. *A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, in association with the University of California Press, 1988), 164-165, no. 73.

1. A similar figure accompanies Śyāma Tārā in the image from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (cat. no. 7). The figure does not conform to textual descriptions of Ekajātā, who often accompanies Tārā, and is sometimes considered to be a form of Tārā herself, perhaps a semiwrathful form she has emanated to aid her devotees.
2. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 33.
3. The treatment of the body and costume of Tārā strongly resembles a figure of Tārā that was found at Kurkihār in southern Magadha (S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 113), but its resemblance to the Tārā from Hilsa and other examples from northern Magadha preclude a definitive provenance.
4. Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2, 165, says that the inscription records that the image is the "pious gift of the elder monk Sakyamitra"; Dr. B. N. Mukherjee reads the inscription as *De(ya)dharmoyam sthavira Nityvipra* (should be *Nityaviprasya*) and translates it as "This is the religious gift of the venerable (or elder) (monk) Nityavipra." Dr. S. P. Tewari reads the inscription as *De (ya) dharmmōyam sthavira Āryyamitra(sya)* and translates it as "This is the pious gift of sthavira (senior monk) Āryyamitra." Dr. Mukherjee notes that the donative inscription is in incorrect Sanskrit and betrays the influence of a local dialect. Both Dr. Mukherjee and Dr. Tewari identify the script as Siddhamātrka of the ninth century.



## ŚYĀMA TĀRĀ (KHADIRAVANĪ TĀRĀ)

Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha, possibly Nālandā

Ca. mid-ninth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 21 1/2" W: 14 5/8" D: 6 1/4"

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Marshall H. Gould Fund (60.924)

Sculptures from the early Pāla period are often characterized by a highly appealing liveliness, as seen in this image. In contrast, carvings from the late Pāla period are often highly symmetrical, regularized, and stiff. Here the central figure, Tārā, stands in a bent posture, turning her body and head slightly to her right. The double lotus pedestal upon which she stands is slightly off-center in a fashion that is very unusual and enhances the animation of the composition. This arrangement may represent the artist's attempt to accommodate the width of the figure attending Tārā to her proper right, in contrast to the narrower figure to her left.

The highly skilled carving of Tārā's face and body contrast with the relatively crude treatment of the garland band around the rim of the stele, suggesting that the face was executed by a master craftsman while other portions of the stele were carved by a less skilled worker. Although evidence concerning production methods has not survived and we can only guess whether individual artists were solely responsible for separate images, this sculpture suggests that works were sometimes the result of cooperative efforts.

The image was probably carved in the mid-ninth century and was undoubtedly a product of an atelier in Bihar, probably northern Magadha, perhaps even Nālandā. Most characteristic of the Nālandā style are the sharply pointed facial features, but other elements are also representative of the Nālandā idiom of the mid-ninth century.<sup>1</sup>

Tārā's lower garment is rendered in a detailed manner, accurately portraying the design of the textile. Such details are often absent in sculpture, but appear quite commonly in painting. It may be suggested that sculpted images, which were almost certainly painted for display in their original context, would have had details such as textile patterns completed by painting rather than carving.

Tārā may be identified as Śyāma Tārā, also known as Khadiravanī Tārā, on the basis of the blue lotus (*nīlotpala*) that she carries in her left hand and the gift-bestowing gesture (*varada mudrā*) she displays with her right. The standing position, however, is unusual for representations of this form of the goddess.

It has not been possible to identify Tārā's two attendants. The one to her proper left, carrying a sword

and noose, is iconologically identical to Acala (Immovable), a Mahāyāna tutelary deity. However, Acala is not one of Tārā's usual attendants. The figure to Tārā's proper right, with an elephant skin billowing above her head and carrying a sword, skull cup, and severed head, is virtually identical to a four-armed form of Cakrasaṃvara, except that this figure is clearly female rather than male.

A female devotee kneels to the left of Tārā's lotus pedestal. Her small size in comparison with Tārā reflects the Indic practice of using hierarchic scaling in religious imagery. As is common in Pāla period images, a pair of *vidyādhara*s bearing garlands flanks the head of the central figure.

## PUBLISHED:

*Bulletin, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 58, no. 313-314 (1960), 86 (note by John M. Rosenfield); [Donald M. Stadtner], *Medieval Indian Sculpture from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, College of Fine Arts, The University of Texas at Austin, September 5-October 17, 1982 ([Austin]: n.p., 1982), 12, no. 4; Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., *Such an Awakening: Indian Sculpture from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Catalogue of an Exhibition at the Robert Hull Fleming Museum, University of Vermont, opening November 20, 1984 (Burlington, Vermont: Robert Hull Fleming Museum, 1984), 14, no. 11.

1. The central figure is strikingly close in style to a representation of Māyādevī giving birth to Siddhārtha found at Nālandā. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 128. In particular, the headdresses and hairstyles, jewelry and ornamentation, bodily proportions, and facial features are all highly similar.

## 8

## KANAKA (GOLDEN) PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ

Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha, possibly Nālandā

Ca. mid-ninth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 26" W: 12" D: 6 1/2"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection (B62 S32+)

This image was probably created around the same time as the previous sculpture and may also be from a workshop in the vicinity of Nālandā.<sup>1</sup> Its date may be ascertained by comparison with dated sculptures of the mid-to-late ninth century, such as the famous depiction of Tārā that was found at Itkhauri in Hazaribagh District, Bihar.<sup>2</sup> Its associations with the Nālandā idiom may be seen by comparison with a number of stone sculptures found at the site.<sup>3</sup>

The goddess Prajñāpāramitā (Transcendent

Wisdom) is the embodiment of liberating wisdom in Mahāyāna Buddhism and the personification of the Prajñāpāramitā scriptures. Perceived as the source, or mother, of all Buddhas, Prajñāpāramitā enjoys a position of supreme importance in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In this sculpture the mother of Buddhas appears in her Kanaka (Golden) form. She is identified by the gesture she performs with her hands and by the two blue lotuses (*nīlotpala*) she holds aloft, each of which carries a Prajñāpāramitā text. The hand gesture, known as *vyākhyāna mudrā*, is a gesture of teaching or explanation and is a variant of the more well known *dharmacakra mudrā*. Kanaka Prajñāpāramitā sits with her legs folded in *vajraparyāṅkāśana* atop a lotus seat that rests upon a lion throne. She is flanked by a pair of female figures, each of whom also carries a *nīlotpala*. Much smaller in scale than Kanaka Prajñāpāramitā, the size of these tiny attendants reflects their relative spiritual merits. Even smaller in scale are two human worshippers beneath the cloth draped from the lower part of the throne.

This carving is interesting because of the prominence of the textile pattern that appears on Kanaka Prajñāpāramitā's tight-fitting blouse and lower garment. Floral and other patterns are often found in painted representations of drapery from the Pala period (cat. nos. 57-60), but in carving or metal castings such details are often absent. It is likely that these minute details were originally added by painting the images. Although all traces of original paint on Pala period images has disappeared over the centuries, polychromy must once have been an important element both aesthetically and for iconographic purposes, since so many of the deities in Hinduism and Buddhism have characteristic colors as well as hand gestures and implements.

Kanaka Prajñāpāramitā's ornamentation includes an unusual belt with a *kīrttimukha* ornament and tassels that drape between her crossed legs and over the edge of her lotus pedestal. Her jewelry consists of a necklace, circular earrings, armlets, and bracelets, as well as a diadem. Her hair is arranged in a *karaṇḍamukūṭa*, a coiffure that is likened to a conical basket with the smaller end at the top. The goddess is slender, with narrow waist and hips, but her breasts are full and round and her shoulders are broad. Her smiling countenance and downcast eyes evoke a meditative, serene mood. At the same time, the image has an inherent sense of vitality, and her body seems alert and erect. Animation is also provided by the streamers issuing out of the sides of her headdress, as if caught by the wind.

#### Inscriptions:<sup>4</sup>

Language: Sanskrit

Script and date: Siddhamātrkā of about the ninth century

Inscription around the head:

Y(e) dharmmā hetuprabhavā he(tun) (te) shā(m)  
Tathāgata hyavadat(should be Tathagato hyavadat)  
esha (should be tesham)

[cha yo nirodha evamvādī Mahā-śramaṇaḥ]

Translation: "Buddhist creed." (See cat. no. 1.)

Inscription on pedestal:

Kikābhap(ū)rvasya

Translation: (Gift) of Kikābhapūrava.

#### PUBLISHED:

*Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 7; Terese Tse Bartholomew, " 'Taming of the Elephant' and Other Pāla Sculptures in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco," in Debala Mitra and Gouriswar Bhattacharya, eds., *Nalinikānta Śatavārṣikī, Dr. N. K. Bhattasali Centenary Volume (1888-1988), Studies in Art and Archaeology of Bihar and Bengal*, Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series no. 83 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989), 64, fig. 8.

1. The records of the Asian Art Museum note that Janice Leoshko has suggested that this image is from Bodh Gayā based on its resemblance to a drawing of an image from Bodh Gayā published in Montgomery Martin, ed., *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India; Comprising the Districts of Behar, Shahabad, Bhagulpur, Goruckpur, Dinajepoor, Puraniya, Ronggopoor, and Assam*, 3 vols. (London: William H. Allen and Co., 1836-38; reprint, Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1976), vol. 1, pl. 9, no. 6. However, key details of this image, such as the books atop the lotuses carried by the goddess and the streamers issuing from her headdress, are absent in the drawing, while such details are generally included in the drawings published by Martin. On a stylistic basis, the image is more likely to have been made in the northern Magadha region; its resemblance to the piece published by Martin may result from the coincidence of a similar iconographic configuration. Further, it is impossible to assess the provenance of any of the images published by Martin based on the drawings because of the peculiarities of the outline style employed by the draftsmen who prepared the materials.
2. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 40. The Itkhauri image is dated in the eighth year of the reign of King Mahendrapāla, who had been identified previously as a king of the Pratihāra line but now is recognized as a Pāla ruler. Mahendrapāla's eighth regnal year would correspond to about A.D. 858.
3. See, for example, S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 128 and 133. Similarities in the treatments of the diadems and hairstyles are particularly notable, as is the crisp and pointy treatment of the facial features.
4. Kindly read by Dr. B. N. Mukherjee.

# BUDDHA'S DESCENT FROM TRĀYASTRIMŚA HEAVEN

Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha  
Ca. third quarter ninth century, Pāla period  
Grey black stone

H: 25 5/16" W: 15 1/8"

On loan from the Far Eastern Department, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada (961.171)

The rounded body and somewhat squat proportions of the central Buddha are similar to depictions of Buddha figures in dated images found in northern Magadha of about the mid-ninth century or slightly later.<sup>1</sup> Based on other similarities with them, such as the treatment of facial features and the hair style, it may be suggested that this image was also the product of a northern Magadhan workshop. The unembellished backslab and pedestal, the simple treatment of the decorated rim, and the rounded shape of the stele are all characteristic of the early Pāla period style.

One of the events of the Buddha's life that was codified into the set of eight major events by the Pāla period was the Buddha's descent from Trāyastriṃśa heaven, which took place at Sāṃkāśya in modern Uttar Pradesh. After having performed the miracle at Śrāvastī, the Buddha asked himself where Buddhas of the past had gone after performing the miracle. Like others before him, he thus went to Trāyastriṃśa heaven, the residence of the thirty-three (Hindu) gods, where he spent three months teaching the *Abhidharma* to his mother and the *devas* residing there.<sup>2</sup>

According to the *Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā*,<sup>3</sup> when the Buddha was ready to return to earth he informed Indra, the king of Trāyastriṃśa heaven, whereupon Indra created three ladders for the descent. The central one, made of jewels, was to be used by the Buddha, while the flanking ones of precious metals would be used for his attendants; Brahmā would descend upon a silver ladder on the left, while the other deities would use a gold one on the right. In art, as in this example, Indra himself is invariably shown as the Buddha's second companion.

In typical Pāla depictions of the subject, such as this one, a large, central standing Buddha is flanked by the smaller, hierarchically scaled gods Brahmā and Indra. Brahmā is recognized by his three faces (a fourth is implied at the rear) and his ascetic's appearance, including his *jaṭamukuṭa* (crown of matted locks) hair style. Standing to the Buddha's proper right, he holds a *caurī* (fly-whisk) and a *kamaṇḍalu* (water vase). The *caurī* is a common attribute in Indic iconography and indicates the role of an attendant whose duty is to brush flies away from a more exalted being. The *kamaṇḍalu* holds holy water used in ritual purifications and initiations. The crowned and royally

garbed Indra, himself king of Trāyastriṃśa heaven, also serves as an attendant to the Buddha. The umbrella (*chattra*) he holds above the Buddha's head indicates his subservient role as an attendant to the Buddha, for the act of holding the umbrella is a sign of respect and veneration. In some Pāla period depictions of this subject, it is Brahmā who carries the umbrella, suggesting that there were variations in the textual descriptions of the event.

The inclusion of Brahmā and Indra as integral elements in the narrative, here and in other Buddha life scenes, such as the Buddha's birth, indicates the supremacy of the Buddha over other beings, both human and divine. Unlike religions wherein faith in one supreme being requires suspension of belief in others, Buddhism and other Indic religions accept all gods as real, although the various traditions may disagree regarding their relative rank and power.

Although in most Pāla period depictions of the descent from Trāyastriṃśa heaven the tops of the ladders upon which the Buddha and his attendants stand are depicted, in this relief the ladders are not shown. Instead, the Buddha stands atop a double lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*). A pair of *stūpas* appears as if in the sky.

To greet the Buddha upon his return to earth, multitudes gathered at Sāṃkāśya. Later textual sources, namely, the narratives of Faxian<sup>4</sup> and Xuanzang,<sup>5</sup> include reference to a nun named Utpalā (or Utpalavarnā), who had vowed to be the first to see the Buddha upon his return. As a woman, and therefore not a privileged member of ancient Indic religious society, it was unlikely that she would be able to secure a position near the ladders. However, the Buddha, knowing of her vow and her previously accumulated religious merit, transformed her into a universal monarch (*cakravartin*) so that she could take her rightful place at the site of the Buddha's descent. When she arrived at that place, she returned to her original appearance and became the first to greet the Buddha, whereupon the Buddha predicted her future enlightenment.

The small figure at the left in this relief is undoubtedly the shaven-headed nun Utpalā, kneeling in adoration of the Buddha. Unlike the usual donor figures who appear on the lower portion of the pedestal of an image, this figure is on the same level as the lotus pedestal of the Buddha and thus is an integral part of the narrative.

The central Buddha stands without flexion. His right hand displays the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*). His gift in this case is the prediction of enlightenment and promise of future attainment, not only to the pious Utpalā but to all devotees. The open hand of the Buddha displays a wheel (*cakra*) inscribed on the palm and webbing between his fingers. These two characteristics are considered to be *lakṣaṇas* (auspicious signs) that were present on his body at the time of birth and were indicative



of his special nature. The Buddha's left hand holds his robe in a gesture typical of Buddha figures.

Textual sources credit King Aśoka of the Maurya dynasty, ancient India's first great Buddhist king, with having excavated the original stairs used by the Buddha and his attendants at Sāṃkāśya. According to Faxian, Aśoka also erected a Buddha image sixteen cubits in height and placed it on the middle of the stairs.<sup>6</sup> This image or a later replacement may have been in worship at Sāṃkāśya and may have served as a model for the Pāla depictions.

This relief may have been part of a group of stelae that together represented a series of life scenes of the Buddha. Although a complete set has not survived intact from the Pāla period, a few images suggest the practice of grouping separate stelae.<sup>7</sup>

1. For example, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 34, 35, and 37, which were dated therein to the mid-ninth century, and fig. 38, which was dated to the late ninth century. Because of the recent discovery that King Mahendrapāla was a Pāla king and not a member of the Pratihāra dynasty, the dates of these images must be calibrated with the revised chronological chart (see Appendix III, Chart 1). Figs. 34, 35, and 37 should be redated to about the third quarter of the ninth century, while fig. 38 should be redated to the mid-ninth century.
2. This is the only time in the Buddha's teaching career that he is said to have taken absence from his disciples and followers. Buddhist literature includes references to images of the Buddha made during this period by King Prasenajit of Kosala and King Udayāna of Kāśyāp because his followers missed him so keenly. According to Buddhist tradition, the earliest images made of the Buddha were these images, made during the Buddha's own lifetime.
3. Eugene Watson Burlingame, trans., *Buddhist Legends*, 3 vols., Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 28 (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1921; reprint, London: Luzac and Company for The Pali Text Society, 1969), vol. 3, 53.
4. James Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1886; reprint, New York: Paragon Book Reprint, 1965), 49.
5. Samuel Beal, *Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World* (London: Trubner, 1884; reprint, 2 vols. in 1, Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corp., 1969), vol. 1, 205.
6. Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, 50.
7. For example, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 34 and 35, which were clearly part of a set of life scenes. Not only are they identical in size, but their identical inscriptions confirm that they were part of a single dedication.

## 10

### SŪRYA, THE SUN GOD

Eastern India or Bangladesh, possibly Monghyr District of Bihar

Ca. ninth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 36 1/2" W: 19 1/2" D: 6 1/2"

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Nasli and Alice

Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon (68.8.14)

The central figure of Sūrya is very subtly modeled, as may be noticed particularly in the facial features and the rendition of the torso. The expressiveness of the facial features, the downward-glancing eyes, and the shapely, full lips suggest ties to Gupta period precedents, although this image was created when the Pāla style was already well established. The fleshy volumes of the torso also suggest Gupta inspiration, but are configured into the *gomukha* (cow's face) metaphor that was used widely during the Pāla period in renderings of the torsos of male deities.

As is typical of images of this god, Sūrya stands in a frontal and unflexed position. The sun god holds his characteristic lotus flower attribute, which appears as a cluster consisting of a fully opened blossom and two buds held in each of his two hands. He wears his characteristic boots and is adorned like a king with a crown and jewelry, including earrings, a gorget, and an ornamented belt. He also wears a jeweled sacred thread (*upavīta* or *yajñopavīta*) across his left shoulder. The tall crown anticipates late Pāla depictions in its height and triangular decorative panels, but has the solid, cylindrical appearance and flattened top characteristic of ninth-century renderings. Sūrya's sheathed sword is prominently displayed at his left. Flying streamers at the god's sides suggest the motion of wind as he rides his celestial chariot through the sky.

Sūrya's iconography is at an intermediary stage between the seventh-century pre-Pāla type (cat. no. 3) and the final form achieved in the late Pāla period (cat. no. 40).<sup>1</sup> The growing complexity of Sūrya's iconography is reflected in the increase in the number of his attendants. He is accompanied not only by the bearded Piṅgala to his proper right and the youthful Daṇḍa to his proper left, but also by two wives. Because the two wives carry the same attribute, an open lotus blossom, they are indistinguishable. The identification of Sūrya's wives is further complicated by the fact that Hindu literature describes several wives and each wife is known by alternative names. Directly in front of Sūrya and standing between his feet is Uṣas (Dawn), who correctly precedes the god and heralds his advent each day. In front of her crouches Aruṇa, the charioteer (*sūta*) of the sun god. Although Aruṇa is often described as being legless because he was born prematurely, before his legs had formed, he is generally depicted in Pāla images with legs, as here.

The pedestal of the image is sculpted to depict Sūrya's celestial chariot being drawn by his seven steeds. The central steed, depicted frontally at the center of the pedestal, is encircled by a form that represents one of the wheels of the celestial chariot. On the upper portion of the pedestal above the steeds, a central animal mask and a series of serpent heads are incised. The irregular spacing of these elements and their low-relief rendering is puzzling in light of the quality of carving seen elsewhere in this composition. A more three-dimensionally rendered serpent appears at the left end of the pedestal next to the horse at the left, and a kneeling devotee appears at the right of the seven horses. The iconographic relationship between the horses and the serpents, if any, is not yet understood.

This sculpture is unusual in the two-dimensional execution of the details of the backslab. In contrast to the fully modeled figures, the backslab elements are created through incised line and very low relief carving, yet it is unlikely that the carving is unfinished. The subtlety of the background and Sūrya's separation from it give an airy quality to the scene. It is possible that the artist intended to evoke an aerial atmosphere by de-emphasizing the backslab elements. The treatment of Sūrya's halo is also unusual because of its teardrop shape and the way it is rendered by concentric, incised lines. In contrast to the usual Pāla period depictions of halos, which are either entirely plain or entirely banded by decorative motifs, this halo combines a plain treatment of the general form with a bead motif and rays of light at the top. In spite of the pointed shape of the halo, the stele is rounded at the top and supports the attribution of a ninth-century date for the image.

In the visualization of this image, the devotee should see Sūrya standing in his chariot accompanied by his two male attendants and two wives and with Uṣas and Aruṇa at the front of the chariot. Flying alongside the entourage is a pair of female archers, who are said to drive away darkness, while a pair of garland-bearing *vidyādhara*s hover above. Because of the low relief carving of the backslab, the presence of Sūrya's flying streamers, and the angle of the two airborne archers as they seem to turn in space, the artist creates the illusion of a skyborne chariot more graphically than any other Pāla treatment of the subject.

Stylistically this representation of Sūrya and his entourage is unusual in a number of ways, particularly in the subtle rendering of the face and fleshy torso of the main figure and the low-relief execution of the details of the backslab. Therefore, the image is difficult to place within the known artistic schools of the Pāla period. It may be suggested that it is a product of a workshop in Monghyr District, Bihar, particularly because of the unusual modeling of the torso.<sup>2</sup>

1. See also Introduction to the Pāla Period and cat. no. 3 for general discussion of Sūrya. For a detailed discussion of Sūrya's iconography in Pāla period art, see Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum* (Dacca: Dacca Museum Committee, 1929), 148-173.
2. The emphasized modeling of the torso appears in a number of images from Monghyr District. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 147 and 148.

## 11

### QUEEN MĀYĀDEVĪ GIVING BIRTH TO SIDDHĀRTHA (ŚĀKYAMUNI BUDDHA)

Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha region

Ca. tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 15 3/4" W: 9" D: 4"

The Brooklyn Museum, Gift of the Charles E. Bloom Foundation, in memory of Charles and Mildred Bloom (85.223.2)

Depictions of Buddha life scenes were highly standardized in the Pāla period, and one can find numerous examples of a given subject, differing among themselves only in stylistic interpretation and iconographic details. Representations of the birth of Śākyamuni Buddha invariably center on a large main figure of Queen Māyādevī with her right arm upraised and grasping the branch of a *śāla* tree.<sup>1</sup> The infant Buddha-to-be is sometimes shown emerging from her right side or, as here, being received by the god Indra after he had already emerged. Māyādevī is generally attended by at least one female companion (here, to Māyā's left) and one or both of the Hindu deities Indra and Brahmā. In this relief, the birth scene is conflated with the sequence of events that took place immediately after the birth. While Māyādevī still stands holding the branch of the birthing tree, the infant stands atop seven lotuses that represent the completion of the seven steps he took in the four directions after his birth, to signify his universal rulership.

Buddhist texts offer a variety of descriptions of the birth, which took place at Lumbinī. The child is said to have been born fully conscious and with full faculties. One text reports that at the time of his birth "there shone a supernatural light, dazzling like gold and delighting the eye."<sup>2</sup>

Representations of the Buddha's birth invariably emphasize Queen Māyā rather than the newborn child: she is the central, largest figure, and if one does not look carefully one might even overlook the small child. This convention contrasts with the depictions of all other Buddha life scenes, wherein the Buddha is invariably the largest and most important figure in the composition. Since it would be possible to create a compositional type in which the child was emphasized, the prominence of Queen Māyā is probably deliberate and intended to highlight her role as the generator of the Buddha.

This image was probably created in southern Magadha around the tenth century, in view of its close stylistic resemblance to works of that date produced at sites like Bodh Gayā, Gayā, and Kurkihar.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to contemporaneous works from northern Magadhan sites, such as Nālandā, southern Magadhan pieces generally display a more flattened treatment of the bodies and faces and greater breadth across the heads and headdresses. Many of the details are less crisp and the facial features less pointed than those from Nālandā.

The treatment of the rim of the backslab, with its inner twisted garland band and *prabhā* motif, is widespread in Pāla art of the ninth and tenth centuries. Typical of early Pāla stone sculptures, the pedestal has a single projecting bay that carries the central figure and her lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*).

Two Sanskrit inscriptions appear on the image. The inscription on the backslab surrounding the central figure is the usual Buddhist consecratory formula.<sup>4</sup> The inscription on the pedestal records the gift of the donor of the image.<sup>5</sup>

1. The tree is sometimes identified as an *aśoka* tree. For the *śāla* tree, see T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Buddhist Birth Stories or Jātaka Tales* (reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 66.
2. John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 246.
3. Compare, for example, with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 104 and 115, in terms of the treatment of the edging of the backslab and the lotus pedestal. Details of the headdress and costume and the general configuration of the figure and facial features are also prevalent in the corpus of southern Magadhan sculpture.
4. See cat. no. 1.
5. Dr. B. N. Mukherjee identifies the script as Siddhamatrkā of the ninth or tenth century and reads the donative inscription, which he notes appears twice, both at the left and the right, as "Of Mahapayanda."

12

## MĀRĪCĪ (SHINING), BUDDHIST GODDESS OF THE DAWN

Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha

Ca. tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 29" W: 13 1/2" D: 5 1/2"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection (B63 S10+)

Mārīcī is the goddess of the dawn and is often worshipped at sunrise. Because of her solar symbolism, she is often said to be the Buddhist counterpart of the Hindu sun god, Sūrya, and indeed the iconographies of these two divinities are likely to be related. However, the numerous differences between the two deities vastly outnumber their few points of similarity. Not only do they differ in gender, but Sūrya crosses the sky in a chariot drawn by seven horses, while Mārīcī's celestial chariot is pulled by seven pigs.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, her entourage and attributes bear little

resemblance to those of Sūrya.

Textual descriptions enumerate a variety of forms for Mārīcī, who may have one, three, five, or six faces and two, eight, ten, or twelve arms. Here she appears in a three-headed, six-armed form. Her central face is that of a beautiful woman but her two side faces are those of pigs. The presence of the two pigs' faces instead of the more usual single pig's face identifies the form of the goddess as Ubhayavarāhānana (literally, "having boar faces on both sides") Mārīcī. Her right hands hold a pronged ritual implement known as a *vajra*, an arrow (*śara*), and an *aśoka* flower (*Saraca indica*) that is accurately rendered with its pinnately compound leaves and clustered flowers.<sup>2</sup> In her left hands she holds a threaded needle (*sūci* [needle] and *sūtra* [thread]) with which she sews up the eyes of the wicked, a noose (*pāśa*) with which she snares the enemies of Buddhism, and a bow (*cāpa* or *dhanu*). The bow and arrow together sometimes symbolize strength of will or, in Buddhism, the chasing away of forgetfulness and neglect (of the Buddhist Dharma).<sup>3</sup> The hand that holds the noose simultaneously displays one of Mārīcī's characteristic gestures, the *tarjanī mudrā*, in which the index finger is raised in a gesture of threat to ward off enemies, that is, obstacles to well-being and liberation.

The goddess stands in a pose that is sometimes described as *ālīḍha* (jumping) and sometimes as *pratyālīḍha*. The *ālīḍha* pose is said to signify heroism, since it suggests standing as if in position to draw an archer's bow. *Pratyālīḍhā* is similar, but apparently an even more aggressive stance. Some sources distinguish the two poses according to whether the left or the right foot is forward, but it remains unclear whether the two names refer to differences in degree of accentuation or reversals of the legs.<sup>4</sup>

Mārīcī stands atop a lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*) that in turn rests upon her four-wheeled chariot drawn by seven pigs. Two small figures on the pedestal represent Mārīcī's two charioteers. Mārīcī is clad in a skirtlike lower garment with a floral design, a breastband, and jewelry that includes necklaces, armbands, bracelets, anklets, and earrings. Her three heads are diademed and elaborately coiffed in a hair style called *karaṇḍamukuṭa* (basket crown) because it resembles an inverted conical basket. Each headdress is adorned with a small *stūpa*, and her central head has a third eye in the center of the forehead.

Mārīcī has been compared with Vārāhī, the feminine counterpart of the Hindu god Viṣṇu in his Varāha, or boar, incarnation, and she is sometimes confused with the female Buddha Vajravārāhī, who may also have a pig's face. However, textual sources clearly identify her as an independent goddess emanating from the Buddha Vairocana. The symbolism of the pig (*sūkara*) as related to Mārīcī has not been explained satisfactorily. In Western culture, swine are seen as animals to be disdained or even



ridiculed, but in the Indic world, they are sometimes associated with favorable connotations. For example, Varāha, the boar incarnation of Viṣṇu, is the rescuer of the world. Further, as an animal that furrows in the earth, the boar is associated with ploughing and agriculture and hence fecundity and the abundance of earthly riches. (The Sanskrit word *potra* refers to both the snout of a hog and a plow.) However, in the Buddhist context, swine often have negative connotations and may symbolize the root poison of ignorance. Therefore, the meaning of this important aspect of Mārīcī's symbolism remains to be explored.

The close stylistic resemblance of this sculpture to tenth-century images from southern Magadhan sites like Bodh Gayā and Kurkihār leaves little doubt about its date and place of manufacture. Not only is the overall configuration of the image typical of the southern Magadha school of the tenth century, but specific details have counterparts in a number of images of this school. Particularly significant are the flattened treatment of the face and the style of the diadem which, unlike examples from northern Magadhan sites like Nālandā, has a straight base rather than one that is curved in the shape of a widow's peak.<sup>5</sup>

The Sanskrit inscription around the halo records the Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1) and is written in tenth-century characters.<sup>6</sup>

#### PUBLISHED:

René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé and Terese Tse, *Indian and South-East Asian Stone Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1969), 74-75, fig. 32; *Bukkyo Geijutsu* (Ars Buddhica), no. 126, p. 75; *Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 8; Terese Tse Bartholomew, "Two Solar Images of Eastern India to be Shown in Sculpture Exhibit," *The Society for Asian Art Newsletter* 23, no. 2 (Winter 1984), 5; Terese Tse Bartholomew, "Taming of the Elephant and Other Pāla Sculptures in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco," in Debala Mitra and Gouriswar Bhattacharya, eds., *Nalinikānta Śatavārsikī, Dr. N. K. Bhattasali Centenary Volume (1888-1988), Studies in Art and Archaeology of Bihar and Bengal*, Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series no. 83 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989), 63-64, fig. 7; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 31, fig. 5.

2. Terese Tse Bartholomew, "Taming of the Elephant and Other Pāla Sculptures in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco," in Debala Mitra and Gouriswar Bhattacharya, eds., *Nalinikānta Śatavārsikī, Dr. N. K. Bhattasali Centenary Volume (1888-1988), Studies in Art and Archaeology of Bihar and Bengal*, Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series no. 83 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989), 63-64, fig. 7.
3. Liebert, *Iconographic Dictionary of the Indian Religions*, 73.
4. For discussion of the two terms, see Liebert, *Iconographic Dictionary of the Indian Religions*, 11 and 227.
5. For an example of the southern Magadhan treatment of the diadem base in a tenth-century image, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 104; for the northern style of the same approximate period, see *op. cit.*, fig. 133. There are, of course, exceptions to this general pattern.
6. Dr. B. N. Mukherjee identifies the script as very late Siddhamātrkā or very early proto-Bengali.

#### 13

### BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA) FLANKED BY TWO BUDDHAS

Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha, possibly Nālandā

Ca. late ninth or tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 37" W: 20" D: 11"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Dudley P. Allen Fund (35.146)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

The moment of Śākyamuni's enlightenment at Bodh Gayā is the *summum bonum* of all soteriological methodologies in Buddhism. After a profound internal struggle against the forces of egoistic existence, which are personified by the god Māra (Death), the ascetic former prince finally conquered all outflows of desire and passion to achieve the right to enlightenment (*bodhi*). While Māra, with his armies and beautiful daughters who attempted to seduce the Buddha-to-be, are not represented in this stele, other elements of this conceptually transcendent event are present. In its mundane manifestation, the event involved simply a ragged ascetic seated on a bed of *kuśa* grass under a *pīṭa* tree in the middle of a field on the banks of the Nairāṇjanā River, but efforts to communicate the transcendence of the event and to illustrate the spiritual beings in attendance generated complex and rich visual statements of the type seen here.

The Buddha-to-be is depicted at the exact moment when, challenged by Māra regarding his right to receive enlightenment, he reaches out with his right hand and touches the earth (*bhūmi*) in a gesture known as *bhūmisparśa mudrā* (earth-touching gesture). He thus calls forth the goddess of the earth (Bhūmidevī) to attest to his having purified himself of all defilements and his entitlement to attain the final developmental stage (*bhūmi*) of attainment, that is, to become a fully enlightened Buddha (*samyaksambuddha*), the ultimate level (*bhūmi*) of the

1. There are a few images from India where horses are shown instead of pigs.

Buddhist path. Clearly, a play on the word *bhūmi*, as both “earth” and “level,” is implicit in this event and its artistic representations. In this way, the former prince Siddhārtha becomes Śākyamuni, “Sage of the Śākya (clan),” or Gotama Buddha.

Properly called the Māravijaya, the event occurred at a spot known as the Vajrāsana (diamond seat) or, alternatively, the *bodhimaṇḍa* (literally, “enlightenment circle,” but more properly “ornament of enlightenment”) at Bodh Gayā. This spot is held by some texts to be the only place where the meditations leading to enlightenment can occur. The pervasiveness of images depicting this event in the corpus of Pāla period art indicates not only a doctrinal emphasis on enlightenment in Buddhism but the importance of Bodh Gayā as a sacred site. Further, as suggested previously,<sup>1</sup> it is likely that the Māravijaya image came to serve as an emblem of the Pāla rulers themselves, further reinforcing its importance in the Pāla artistic repertoire. One of the most widely emulated of the Pāla images, the Māravijaya type also occurs frequently in the art of Pāla-inspired traditions (for example, cat. nos. 61, 62, 69, 107, 124, and 135).<sup>2</sup>

The Buddha sits with his legs folded and crossed in a pose known as *padmāsana* or *vajraparyāṅkāśana* atop a double lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*). The lotus, a well-known and pervasive symbol of transcendence in Indic culture, is especially appropriate in representations of the enlightenment events. Rising through the muddy waters of the mundane world into the pure air of transcendence, the lotus bursts forth with one of the most spectacular blooms in the floral world and is therefore a perfect metaphor for the progress of a Buddha rising from the mud of desire, avarice, and greed to the purity of the state of enlightenment.

Above the Buddha are branches of the *aśvattha* or *pīpal* (*Ficus religiosa*) tree, the sacred enlightenment (*bodhi*) tree of Śākyamuni.<sup>3</sup> The elegant leaves of this tree are easily recognized by their heart-shaped form and distinctively long drip tails.

The two smaller Buddhas flanking the central figure are placed as if they are attendants to the central image, and each is surrounded by his own aura of light (*prabhāmaṇḍala*). These figures may represent two of the Buddha life events commonly included in the Pāla repertoire. The Buddha to the proper right of the main figure lowers his right hand in the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*), suggesting that the subject is the Buddha’s descent from Trāyastriṃśā.<sup>4</sup> The Buddha on the proper left of the central figure raises his right hand in the gesture of granting the absence of fear (*abhaya mudrā*). It is possible that this Buddha portrays the taming of the mad elephant Nālāgiri. In Pāla art, however, the taming of the elephant is usually indicated by the placement of the Buddha’s hand in a lowered position, as if to quell the wild

beast. Since *abhaya mudrā* is a gesture of protection, it might also be appropriate for this subject. Therefore, in spite of this irregularity, it may be suggested that these two figures, together with the large central figure, represent three life events of the Buddha.<sup>5</sup> As further corroboration, a similar pair of standing Buddhas flanking a central Buddha is clearly part of a Buddha life scene configuration in a slightly later carving (cat. no. 15).

The Buddha’s double lotus pedestal rests atop a segmented throne base that contains a front-facing elephant in the central section and actively posed, roaring lions in the side sections. At the far left of the pedestal a bearded, kneeling devotee offers a garland, while at the far right another bearded, kneeling devotee performs the gesture of devotion (*añjali mudrā*) with his hands. Unlike the princely donors who are often seen at the base of Pāla period images, these two figures are ascetics, as may be surmised from their beards and the absence of jewelry and other ornaments.

Another unusual feature of this sculpture is the way in which the two flying *vidyādhara*s are depicted. Like the usual *vidyādhara*s who bear garlands as if to proffer them to a large central figure in Pāla compositions, these figures fly near the top of the stele and appear against clouds. However, unlike the usual royally garbed celestial *vidyādhara*s seen in Pāla art (cat. no. 37), these figures wear the robes and have the shaven heads of monks. The reasons for this variation are unknown but may correlate with the fact that the two donorlike figures on the pedestal are ascetics.

A number of interesting issues are raised by the varied ways in which the robes are worn by the figures in this image. The central Buddha is shown with his right shoulder bare. In addition, his garment has visible folds as it drapes across the body and is wrapped so that it encircles the left shoulder, with the end falling in front of the Buddha’s chest. The upper garments of the two smaller Buddhas cover both shoulders. These robes have no visible pleats and fall smoothly as they cling to the body. The robes worn by the monk-*vidyādhara*s provide a third variation. Although their garments leave one shoulder bare so that at first they seem to resemble that of the central Buddha, it is clear from the different pattern of folds across their bodies and the absence of the end of the cloth hanging at the shoulder that they are draped across the body in a different way and represent a variant type.

The complexities surrounding different garment styles of Buddhist monks and practitioners in the images depicting them and their relationship to the many regional and sectarian variations of Buddhism are still not understood. However, it is well known that members of various Buddhist sects wrapped their robes in distinctive ways. The styles evolved and changed over time and had regional variations. In the Pāli schools of Buddhism, three

separate garments (*tricīvara*) comprised the monk's costume. These included an undercloth, which is worn in skirtlike fashion around the hips and legs (*antarvāsaka*); an upper garment or robe (*uttarāsaṅga*); and a third piece that is like a shawl (*saṅghāṭī*).<sup>6</sup> In some circumstances, apparently only the lower garment and robe were worn. The robe could be worn in either the "open" mode, with only one shoulder covered, or in the "covering" mode, with both shoulders covered.<sup>7</sup> The shawl was not worn at all times but could be added and draped in either the open or closed mode.

It is sometimes difficult to determine from sculpted images whether an upper garment represents the *uttarāsaṅga* or the *saṅghāṭī*, since both may be worn in a manner that covers both shoulders or leaves one shoulder bare. What is important in this analysis is the fact that a distinction is being made among the figures in the image. In the case of the two smaller Buddhas versus the central figure, it may be hypothesized that the different garments distinguish between pre-enlightenment and post-enlightenment raiments. (See cat. no. 14, where this distinction also occurs.)<sup>8</sup> But it is unknown whether the distinction is tied to certain proprieties of dress, the season during which the events took place, or other factors. The appearance of the robes worn by the *vidyādhara*s is unusual in the Pāla context and instead resembles a style prevalent in the imagery of southern India and Sri Lanka, thus raising the interesting issue of interactions among Buddhists of different traditions during the Pāla period.<sup>9</sup>

The late ninth- or tenth-century date for this carving may be determined by comparison with a dated image from the reign of King Mahendrapāla,<sup>10</sup> as well as other images from the Pāla regions that have been calibrated with dated images of the period.<sup>11</sup> On the basis of stylistic similarity to works from northern Magadha, particularly those found at Nālandā, it may be suggested that this example is from that vicinity. Unlike contemporaneous images from southern Magadha, this work has greater depth of carving and a greater sense of volume to the figures and the elements of the composition.<sup>12</sup> The rich carving of the crossbar of the throne back shows a foliate motif of a type that is also found in the artistic traditions of other Pāla-related regions, including Nepal and Indonesia.

The partially obliterated Sanskrit inscription on the pedestal is written in characters of the ninth or tenth century, but has not yet been deciphered.<sup>13</sup> Because of its placement below the lotus pedestal, it is likely to be dedicatory rather than religious in content. The inscriptions on the lotus petals of the *padmapīṭha* record the opening portion of the Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1).

PUBLISHED:

Alvan C. Eastman, *Exhibition of Early Indian*

*Sculptures, Paintings, Bronzes and Textiles*, Heeramaneck Galleries Catalogue (1934), 10 and 29, pl. 14; *The Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition*, Cleveland Museum of Art (1936), no. 381, pl. 77; H. C. Hollis, "An Indian Buddhist Stele," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Nov. 1937), 133, 135-137; *The Art News* (Nov. 13, 1937), 20; *Buddhist Art*, Detroit Institute of Arts, 24th Loan Exhibition, October 1942, no. 19; Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art* (New York: Abrams, 1964), 114, fig. 131 (also reproduced in subsequent editions); *Handbook of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (1966), 232; *The Human Adventure*, vol. 1, *Ancient Civilization*, 1st ed. (Cleveland: The Educational Research Council of Greater Cleveland, 1965-1966), 128; Wai-kam Ho, "Three Seated Stone Buddhas," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 53 (April 1966), 88a; Margaret F. Marcus, "Sculptures from Bihar and Bengal," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art for October 1967*, 54 (Oct. 1967): 240-262; Wai-kam Ho, "Notes on Chinese Sculpture from Northern Ch'i to Sui, Part 1: Two Seated Stone Buddhas in the Cleveland Museum," *Archives of Asian Art* 22 (1968-1969), 17, fig. 13; *Handbook of The Cleveland Museum of Art/1978* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum, 1978), 294; Alice N. Heeramaneck, *Masterpieces of Indian Sculpture from the Former Collections of Nasli M. Heeramaneck* (Verona, Italy: Alice N. Heeramaneck, 1979), cat. no. 113.

1. See Introduction to the Pāla Period.
2. For additional discussion of the Māravijaya scene in Pāla art and its possible role as an emblem of the Pāla kings, see introduction to the Pāla period.
3. Each Buddha has a different tree as his *bodhi* tree; the term *bodhi* does not refer to a specific type of tree but rather a tree that served in the enlightenment process of a Buddha.
4. For comparison, see cat. no. 9.
5. An alternative suggestion is that the two side Buddhas represent two of the Buddhas of the past who, according to tantric beliefs, conferred enlightenment on Śākyamuni.
6. For discussion of these separate components of the monk's garments and how they are draped, see Alexander B. Griswold, "Prologomena to the Study of the Buddha's Dress in Chinese Sculpture," *Artibus Asiae* 26, no. 2 (1963): 85-131 and *Artibus Asiae* 27, no. 4 (1965): 335-348. I am grateful to Forrest McGill for pointing out the relevance of these articles to the study of Pāla art. Griswold's study and some of the terminology he uses derive from Pāli sources that may not have been relevant to the situation in the Pāla period.
7. These descriptive terms were coined by Griswold but have come into popular usage, particularly in descriptions of Buddha images from Thailand. See Griswold, "Prologomena to the Study of the Buddha's Dress in Chinese Sculpture," pt. 1, 86-91.
8. I have not studied this problem in detail; however, in examining a number of Pāla images at random, I have observed that this occurs quite regularly.
9. For comparison, see D. T. Devendra, *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture, c. 300 B.C. to A.D. 1000* (London: Alec Tiranti, 1958), figs. 71 and 72. A similar garment is sometimes seen in Pāla art; see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 130.
10. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 39, which should be dated to the mid-ninth century based on the reevaluation of King Mahendrapāla as a Pāla, not a Pratihāra, king. (See introduction to the Pāla period.) The Cleveland sculpture appears to be later than the dated image and may belong to the late ninth or the tenth century.
11. For example, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 117 and 118, which are from southern Magadha, and figs. 129 and 130, which are from northern Magadha.
12. For a closely related image from Nālandā, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-*



Sena" *Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 130. The detailing of the throne back and treatment of the central figures are especially similar.

13. Neither B.N. Mukherjee nor Dr. S. P. Tewari were able to decipher the text due to its partially worn state and the difficulties caused by attempting to read from photographs. Dr. Mukherjee believes the script is of the ninth or tenth century type, while Dr. Tewari assigns it to the tenth century.

14

# BUDDHA WITH EIGHT BUDDHA LIFE SCENES AND TĀRĀ

Probably India, Bihar, possibly Nalanda or Monghyr District

Ca. tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 31" W: 18" D: 6 3/4"

Alsdorf Foundation, Chicago

The central Buddha stands frontally and in an unflexed position on a double lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*). Behind him is an elaborately carved throne back and a halo behind his head. His right hand displays the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*), while his lowered left hand holds the end of his robe. Each hand is backed by an open lotus flower. Surrounding the main Buddha but much smaller in scale are depictions of eight events of the Buddha's life. Clockwise from the lower left are: the birth (shown in miniature scale on the pedestal), the descent from Trāyastriṃśa, the triumph over Māra, the first sermon, the death (*parinirvāṇa*), the miracle at Śrāvastī, the monkey's gift of honey, and the taming of Nālāgiri. Each of these scenes, while highly simplified and abstracted, is nonetheless easily recognizable because of well-established norms of posture, hand gestures, and key elements. At the lower right of the pedestal is a depiction of the Buddhist goddess Tārā. This figure was probably included as a symmetrical counterpart to the birth scene at the lower left of the pedestal, in which the Buddha's mother, Queen Māyā, is the most prominent element.

While the eight life events are a standard subject in Pāla period iconography, it is unusual to find them grouped with an additional representation of a Buddha. Most commonly, one of the events (most often the triumph over Māra) is shown in the center and is surrounded by seven other scenes arranged three on each side and one (the Buddha's death) at the top. However, here a ninth Buddha is included and, as the central, standing Buddha, is the most prominent figure in the entire composition.

The treatment of the robes of the central Buddha provide a clue to his identity, for the folds of the upper garment fall in concentric rings emanating from a center in the middle of the Buddha's chest. This distinctive pattern of folds is reminiscent of the so-called Udayāna type of image, which occurs in a highly standardized manner in

the artistic repertoires of Central Asia (the Khotan region), China, Japan, and Tibet.<sup>1</sup> Although the Udayāna image is traditionally held to be modeled after the "first" image of the Buddha created by King Udayāna of Kauśāmbī during the lifetime of Śākyamuni Buddha,<sup>2</sup> the image type clearly reflects the legacy of the drapery style prevalent during the much later Kuṣāna period (approximately second and third centuries A.D.), as well as the subsequent abstraction and stylization the drapery underwent in both South Asia and Central Asia. In contrast to the other depictions of Buddhas in this relief, the central figure does not depict a Buddha life event *per se*, but may be seen as a "traditional" image of the Udayāna type, which is always shown standing and displaying the *abhaya mudrā*.

In contrast to the garment of the central figure, which is striking because of the distinctive pattern of its folds, the garments of the other Buddhas fall smoothly across their bodies. However, even among these figures there is a difference, for the one in the Māravijaya scene is shown with one shoulder bare while the others wear their upper garment in a way that cover both shoulders. Since the Māravijaya is the only pre-enlightenment event in the group (other than the birth, in which the garb of the child is unclear), it may be inferred that a distinction is being made according to the pre-enlightenment and post-enlightenment phases of the Buddha's life.<sup>3</sup>

The treatment of the hem of the central Buddha's robe is of interest because it resembles patterns seen in other Pāla images and some images from south India and Southeast Asia. Especially notable are the zigzag folds at the sides and the pleats of the hem as the garment falls around the Buddha's body.

The place of manufacture of the image is uncertain; it relates to some images from northern Magadhan sites, such as Nālandā, but is similar in the treatment of the central figure to a Buddha image found at Lakhisarai in the Monghyr District of Bengal. A tenth-century date may be suggested on the basis of the elaboration of the lotus pedestal and ornamentation of the throne back, which are more richly carved than eighth- and ninth-century examples. However, the rounded stele top and simplicity of the figures still reflect the early Pāla idiom rather than the styles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

## PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal (organizer), *Light of Asia: Buddha Śākyamuni in Asian Art* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1984), 57, no. 5.

1. For examples of the drapery type, see Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), pls. 146G, 158E, 158F, and 160E.
2. For the narrative concerning this original image, see John C. Huntington, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of Buddhadarśanapūṇya," in *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia*, ed. A. K. Narain (New Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1985): 23-58 (spec. 31-32).
3. See also cat. no. 13 for discussion of robe distinctions.

CROWNED BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI  
TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA) WITH  
FOUR BUDDHA LIFE SCENES

Probably India, Bihar, Nālandā

Ca. mid-to-late tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black schist (scientifically tested)

H: 27 3/4" W: 14 3/4" D: 6"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D.

Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.36)

During the Pāla period, particularly from the tenth century on, Śākyamuni Buddha was often shown wearing a crown or a diadem, necklaces, and earrings. These "crowned Buddhas" puzzled early scholars of Buddhist art, who viewed the Buddha's ornamentation as a contradiction of his abandonment of worldly riches and the princely life. However, such figures, properly called *mukutaḍharin* (headdress bearer) Buddhas (that is, Buddhas ornamented with the *mukuta*), emphasize the Buddha's role as a universal sovereign.<sup>1</sup>

The crown of the central Buddha (or, more properly here, Buddha-to-be) consists of three triangular sections. This distinctive "leaved" form, generally having either three or five triangular units, is characteristic of crowned Buddha images of the Pāla tradition and also appears with great frequency in the art of Pāla-dependent regions, suggesting a Pāla source for the type. Possibly reserved solely for crowned Buddhas, the crown type apparently does not occur on Bodhisattva images or representations of Hindu gods.<sup>2</sup>

The three triangular sections are attached to a headband that encircles the head, below which a row of the Buddha's curls is visible. The headband section has a widow's peak shape that is characteristic of crown types found at Nālandā and related sites, but contrasts with a straight headband type more popular in southern Magadha (cat. no. 17). The three triangular sections are unified by a central element of the crown, although the large triangles dominate the design. Undoubtedly emulating actual crowns presumably made of metal, most likely gold, the carved surfaces reflect what must have been tooled and chased designs in the metal originals. Two open blossoms, one to either side of the crown, adorn the headgear in a fashion typical of Pāla crowned Buddhas and found widely in Pāla-dependent artistic schools (cat. no. 138).

The Buddha (to-be) wears two neck ornaments, an inner strand of beads (perhaps pearls), and a gorget. While the detailing and subtleties of the shapes of the necklaces worn by crowned Buddhas varies among the many stylistic traditions of Pāla art, the gorget itself is ubiquitous and may be assumed to be part of the proper ornamentation of such figures.

The crowned Buddha (to-be) in the center of this image reaches down in the *bhūmiśparśa mudrā*, signifying the moment at which the Buddha-to-be overcame the forces of Māra. The earth goddess, a key element in textual accounts of the Māravijaya event, is not always present in Pāla depictions of the subject (see cat. nos. 13 and 16) but appears here beneath the lotus pedestal of the Buddha in the center compartment of his throne. Holding a water pot, she appears to be rising from the ground toward the figure above. Facing her is a small garland-bearing male devotee. Above the central figure, branches of the *bodhi* tree under which the event took place are seen flanking an honorific canopy (*chattra*).

Surrounding the central image are four other Buddhas, although unlike the central figure these Buddhas are not adorned with crowns or jewelry. The standing Buddha to the left of the central image depicts Śākyamuni Buddha's descent from Trāyastriṃśa and is identified by the *varada mudrā*. The standing Buddha to the right probably represents Śākyamuni's taming of the elephant Nālagiri, although the *abhaya mudrā* is not restricted to depictions of that event.<sup>3</sup> Two smaller Buddhas in seated postures appear in the upper portion of the stele flanking the head of the central image. The figure at the upper right may be identified as the Buddha receiving the gift of honey from the monkey, as indicated by the bowl held in his lap and the meditative pose (*dhyāna mudrā*) of the hands. However, the other figure displays an unusual *mudrā* for a seated figure during the Pāla period, for his right hand displays the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*). Although this gesture was used as a teaching *mudrā* during earlier periods of Buddhist art,<sup>4</sup> by Pāla times it had been supplanted by *dharmacakra mudrā* as the gesture of discourse. Therefore, it is uncertain whether this figure is intended to represent one of the events usually recognized by the teaching gesture (the first sermon or the miracle at Śrāvastī) or another unidentified event. The central Buddha's upper garment leaves his right shoulder bare, while, in contrast, the other Buddhas have both shoulders covered. As suggested previously (cat. nos. 13 and 14), the different ways in which the robes are worn may distinguish the pre-enlightenment Māravijaya scene from the post-enlightenment phase of the Buddha's life.

Based on a number of features, particularly the crisply carved and pointed facial features, the image may be ascribed to one of the workshops at Nālandā.<sup>5</sup> Reflecting a probable date in the tenth century, the top of the stele comes to a slight point, anticipating the fully pointed and attenuated shape of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The lotus petals of the *padmapīṭha* also suggest a tenth-century date and are far less ornate than examples from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1)

inscribed on the pedestal of the image is notable because of its unusual placement beneath the main image rather than near the figure's head. The paleography of the script suggests that it may be later in date than the image itself.<sup>6</sup> If it was added later, its peculiar placement beneath the figure might have been necessary because it was not part of the original design and had to be added wherever there was space for it.

#### PUBLISHED:

Christie, Manson, and Woods, compiler, *Catalogue of Fine Chinese Porcelain and Hardstones: Indian Stone Carvings and Oriental Objects of Art* (catalogue of an auction held in London on 2 July 1962) (London: Christie, Manson, and Woods, Ltd., 1962), 158, pl. 14; Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd—Part 2* (New York: The Asia Society, Inc., 1975), 14, 20, no. 5; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 20; Susan L. Huntington, "Pre-Pāla and Pāla Period Sculptures in the Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 374-375 and illus. on 372 as fig. 6; Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), 34, 68, 77, 84 [incorrectly identified on p. 84 as Tārā]; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 29-30, fig. 3.

1. The English terms, such as crown, diadem, tiara, and fillet, are not distinguished in the Sanskrit term *mukuta*, which is applicable to all such forms of regal headgear. When an image of a Buddhist deity is represented in the crown, the headgear is called *bimbamukuta*. For an example, see cat. no. 33. See also introduction to the Pāla period.
2. It is possible that there are exceptions to this statement. However, the crown type is definitely associated with Buddhas and not other figures. Bodhisattvas often wear diadems or tiaras rather than full crowns, and their headdresses usually have a more open appearance, revealing the luxurious coiffures characteristic of Bodhisattvas. Triangular panels, when they appear, are generally much smaller than those of the Buddha crown type. Hindu gods in Pāla art often wear conical-shaped crowns, particularly in the early phase. Even when these have triangular panels, there is greater emphasis on the central conical part (cat. no. 10). In later Hindu images, the crowns are less solid looking.
3. For another example and discussion, see cat. no. 13.
4. Huntington and Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, 143, fig. 8.22.
5. The image is the virtual twin in style to another carving that was excavated at Nālandā and is presently at the Nālandā site museum (museum no. 10737). The excavated piece will be published in the Nālandā section of Susan L. Huntington, *Archive of Bihar and Bengal Art*, Microfiche Archive of the American Committee for South Asian Art (Leiden: Inter Documentation Company, forthcoming.)
6. Dr. B. N. Mukherjee identifies the script of this Sanskrit inscription as proto-Bengali or Gaudī of the late tenth or eleventh century. Dr. S. P. Tewari identifies the script as Nāgari of the eleventh or twelfth century. The style of the image precludes a date as late as the twelfth (or even the eleventh) century.

16

#### BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA)

Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha  
Ca. tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 33" W: 17 1/2" D: 9 1/2"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery  
Brundage Collection (B60 S598)

Numerous variations on the theme of the Māravijaya occur in the Pāla artistic repertoire. In this example, the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni has no attendants. He sits with his legs folded in *vajraparyāṅkāśana* directly atop a throne, without a lotus pedestal. His right hand reaches down in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*). Above his head is a bough of the sacred *aśvattha* tree, the *bodhi* tree of Śākyamuni at Bodh Gayā, where this event took place. Śākyamuni's upper garment covers only his left shoulder and falls smoothly across his body, with no evidence of pleats or folds except at the hem and across the chest and shoulder. A roll of flesh around the navel softens the appearance of the otherwise smoothly carved figure.

The pedestal of the image is configured into the form of a throne, which is divided into three compartments, two of which bear depictions of lions. A small kneeling figure of a monk appears where a third lion would be expected. Rampant lions flank the sides of the throne in typical Pāla fashion. An elaborate foliate motif fills the space above the crossbar of the throne back. The curved forms of the foliation suggest the increasingly rich and elaborate detailing of Pāla period imagery from the tenth century on. The placement of Śākyamuni's halo is interesting because of its height in relation to the head, the top of which barely reaches the halo's midpoint.

A number of similar images have been found at southern Magadhan sites, most notably Kurkihār.<sup>1</sup> Aside from the comparability between the central figures and the details of the halos, the architectural treatment of the throne base occurs on a number of carvings from this region. Its main characteristics include the division into three sections, with lions depicted in the separate compartments, and ornamentation with the Indic "moon chamber" (*candraśālā*) motif.

In contrast to the imagery from northern Magadhan sites such as Nālandā, where facial features are more pointed, the face here is flatter and broader (compare to cat. no. 15). Also, unlike its northern Magadhan counterparts, this image and its cohorts are embellished with more two-dimensional, linear carving, as seen in the incised detailing of the throne legs and crossbar and in the flattened treatment of the foliate ornamentation above the throne.

The circle-and-lozenge motif that appears on the



throne legs and crossbars is also seen on an image of Tārā that was found at Itkhauri in Hazaribagh District, Bihar, which bears an inscription of the eighth regnal year of King Mahendrapāla (ca. 858).<sup>2</sup> However, the treatment of the Buddha's face and body suggests ties to works of a slightly later date. The strong resemblance of this carving to a representation of Tārā (cat. no. 17) that must be assigned to the tenth century on the basis of the treatment of elements such as the lotus petals reinforces the suggestion of a slightly later date.

This image is one of three remarkably similar sculptures that are presently in American collections, all of which are finely carved, well balanced, and carefully executed.<sup>3</sup> The differences among the three pieces are so minor that it must be assumed that they came from the same workshop and might even have been part of a single commission.

The Sanskrit inscription around the halo is the Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1), and the inscription on the pedestal records the gift of the donor, a monk who may be the figure represented kneeling in devotion on the pedestal.<sup>4</sup>

#### PUBLISHED:

*Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23–April 10, 1984, no. 3; *Free World* 16, no. 2, 23 (published by Free Asia Press, Manila); *Orientalism* 15, no. 1 (Jan. 1984), 53; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2, 700–1800. *A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, 1988), mentioned 168; Claudine Bautze-Picron, "The Stone Images of the Buddha at Kurkihar," in Debala Mitra and Gouriswar Bhattacharya, eds., *Nalinikānta Śatavārsiki, Dr. N. K. Bhattasali Centenary Volume (1888–1988), Studies in Art and Archaeology of Bihar and Bengal*, Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series no. 83 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989), fig. 9.

1. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 117 and 118, both of which may be slightly later in date than the present image.
2. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 40. At the time of that writing, it was believed that King Mahendrapāla was a Pratihāra king, not a member of the Pāla royal line. The date of the Itkhauri image must now be revised to the mid-ninth, rather than the late ninth, century.
3. One image is now in the collection of The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the other is in the Seattle Art Museum's collection. The Los Angeles and San Francisco pieces are nearly identical in size, while the Seattle image is several inches smaller and is distinctive in some ways, including the plain treatment of the throne back. The Los Angeles piece is virtually identical in nearly every detail to the San Francisco example under discussion, including the distinctive incised circle-and-lozenge design on the throne legs and crossbars. For the Los Angeles piece, see Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2, 700–1800. *A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles: The Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of

California Press, 1988), 168. For the Seattle piece, see Henry Trubner, William Jay Rathbun, and Catherine A. Kaputa, *Asiatic Art in the Seattle Art Museum, A Selection and Catalogue* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1973), 12. The Los Angeles sculpture was dedicated by a monk named Vimalaprabha.

4. Dr. B. N. Mukherjee assigns the script to the ninth or early tenth century and identifies it as Siddhamatrkā. Dr. S. P. Tewari identifies the script as proto-Nāgari of the ninth or tenth century. Dr. Mukherjee reads the inscription on the pedestal as *Deyadharmmoyāḥ* (should be *Deyadharmoyam*) Schhaprasthāprabhāṣya (The religious gift of Schhaprasthāprabhā [Suprasthāprabhā?]). Dr. Tewari reads it as "This is the pious gift of *sthavira* (senior monk) Prajñāprabhā." A reading by Dr. Wladimir Zwalf of the British Museum recorded in the Asian Art Museum files agrees with the reading by Dr. Tewari ("This is the meritorious gift of the *Stha(vira)* Prajñāprabhā.") It may be significant that the Los Angeles sculpture that is nearly identical to this piece was also dedicated by a monk.

#### 17

#### ŚYĀMA TĀRĀ (KHADIRAVANĪ TĀRĀ)

Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha  
Ca. tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 31 1/2" W: 17" D: 9 3/8"

Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, R. T. Miller Fund (61.13)

For discussion of this form of Tārā, see cat. nos. 6, 7, and 113.

Tārā is seated in *lalitāsana* with her pendant right leg resting upon a foot pedestal (*pādapiṭha*) that consists of the pericarp of a lotus flower (*karnikā*); her left leg is folded up on the lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*). Her right hand is in her characteristic gift-bestowing gesture (*varada mudrā*) and her left holds a blue lotus flower (*nilotpala*). Tārā sits upon a double lotus pedestal that rests upon a throne. Flanking the sides of the throne back is a pair of rampant, horned lions (*śārdūla*), a standard element in Pāla period thrones. A pair of lions supports the base of the throne, and a cloth hangs from the front center of the seat. A foliate motif fills the space of the backslab above the crossbars of the throne. A small female devotee worships to the right of the *pādapiṭha*.

Compared with pre-Pāla and early Pāla stone sculptures, this image is far more elaborate. Virtually no space is left uncarved, whereas in earlier images the backslab often included sections of empty space. However, in spite of the greater elaboration, much of the image is conceived in two-dimensional rather than three-dimensional terms. For example, the foliate motifs above the crossbars of the throne, the throne and its leogryphs, and the rim of the halo are treated primarily as two-dimensional elements that are raised above a flat background. This feature is characteristic of the southern Magadha style of this period and contrasts with other contemporaneous Pāla subschools. Further, it contrasts with later works from northern Bengal, which are notable

for their richly carved surfaces and nearly exclusive use of three-dimensional modeling of details (cat. no. 37). Stylistically this image is very close to the preceding example (cat. no. 16).

Tārā's costume, consisting of a lower garment and a diagonal sash across her torso, is standard for female figures in Pāla period art. The textile of her garment is plain, unlike some other examples (cat. no. 8), although the hem as it falls across her ankles appears to have a border design. Richly bejewelled, Tārā is ornamented with a diadem, earrings, necklaces, armlets, bracelets, and anklets.

Placed in its appropriate position surrounding the head of the goddess, the Sanskrit inscription around her halo is the usual Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1).<sup>1</sup> The halo is rimmed with a twisted garland of gems and the *prabhā* motif.

#### PUBLISHED:

The Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, compiler, *The Rochester Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, New York, Handbook* (Rochester, N. Y.: University of Rochester, 1961), 36.

1. Dr. S. P. Tewari classifies the script as proto-Nāgari of the early tenth century. He reports that the script reflects the last phase of the transition between the styles of the Siddhamātrkā and early Nāgari scripts.

18

### ŚIVA AND PĀRVATĪ, SEATED AND EMBRACING (UMĀ-MAHEŚVARA MŪRTI)

Eastern India or Bangladesh, possibly western or central Bengal (ancient Vardhamāna or Vaṅga region)

Ca. tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 12 1/2" W: 7 5/8" D: 2 5/8"

Collection of Dr. David Nalin

For discussion of the iconography of Umā-Maheśvara *mūrti*, see cat. no. 2.

As is customary in Pāla representations of Umā-Maheśvara, Umā sits atop the left knee of her husband, Śiva. In contrast to the earlier example of this subject (cat. no. 2), wherein Śiva had only two arms, here he has four. His rear left arm encircles Umā and with his hand he cups her breast; his front left hand holds his principal attribute, the trident (*triśūla*). The god's forward right hand fondles Umā's chin and his rear right hand holds a blue lotus (*nilotpala*). A serpent appears behind Śiva's right shoulder. His right leg hangs down, resting atop a small lotus footstool above his bull vehicle, Nandi. Umā's right hand reaches around the shoulder of her consort, and her left hand holds a mirror (*darpaṇa* or *ādarśa*). Umā's mount,

the lion, crouches on the pedestal beneath her.

Together, Śiva's four arms and Umā's two arms reveal a complex symbolism. Of the six arms, three are engaged in activities that express the affection or, more correctly, the symbiosis between the two deities. In Indic religious thought, both the masculine and the feminine are necessary, as one activates the other.<sup>1</sup> Expressed as affection between a male and a female, this symbolism is easily understood by even the most uninitiated devotee, but on the highest level the interaction between male and female expresses the unity between the individual and the Universal that is the goal of Hindu religious practice. That half of the god's arms and half of the goddess' arms are directed toward the expression of the bond between the two is therefore not surprising.

The remaining arms of each deity bear attributes that convey other aspects of the religious message. Śiva's trident (*triśūla*), his most common and characteristic symbol, has many layers of meaning. Most importantly, as a powerful weapon that is used against evil or enemies that embody evil, it serves as a symbol of Śiva's invincibility. The blue lotus Śiva holds is a symbol often carried by goddesses as well (in cat. no. 2, it is Umā, not Śiva, who carries it). Unlike Śiva's weapon, which reflects his energetic power, the peaceful and beautiful lotus signifies a balance of elements in his nature.

The mirror held by Umā is an object typically belonging to women and is often carried by goddesses. Therefore, it has been said to serve as a general symbol of the feminine aspect. Just what this feminine aspect is, however, must be explained, for sometimes it has been interpreted to suggest feminine vanity. This mistaken notion probably arose from Western interpretations based upon non-Indic assumptions about the feminine nature and the symbolism of the mirror as a vehicle for vanity. (One need only think of the story of Snow White and her wicked stepmother to recall the pitfalls of feminine vanity and the role of the mirror as a facilitator of such vanity as expressed in Western thought.)

In the Indic context, however, women are not conceived as vain creatures, nor is a mirror a tool to serve their conceit. Instead, the mirror has an important philosophical meaning, for while a mirror reflects the material world, the world that it reflects is not truly real. Therefore, it symbolizes one of the basic principles of Indic thought, that is, skepticism about the validity and truth of the material world. This notion usually is expressed in the term *māyā*, referring to the illusionary nature of the phenomenal world. At the same time that the mirror suggests the falseness of the material realm, it is also a tool that enables one to see and, through seeing, to know that which is ultimately real. The principle of seeing (*darśana*) the divine is central to much of religious activity and has been a major impetus for pilgrimage in both Buddhism

and Hinduism, wherein the devotee goes to see a divine image or place.<sup>2</sup> Another name for a mirror is *ādarśa*, which is based on the same Sanskrit root as *darśana* and suggests the mirror's function as a tool for seeing, knowing, and beholding. The mirror held in the hand of the goddess, then, becomes a vehicle for seeing and knowing, for what it reflects is not her own image, but the nature of the universe and its truths.

Other elements in the composition include a small human devotee kneeling at the left of the pedestal and a bowl of offerings at the right. The back of the throne is decorated with leogryphs atop elephants, a standard Pāla period motif. The crossbars bear another motif commonly seen in Pāla art, namely, geese with elaborate tail feathers who spew strands of gems from their mouths. At the top of the stele, flying *vidyādhara*s carry garlands as if to proffer them to the deities below. In keeping with the invariably symmetrical arrangement of elements in Pāla period images, Śiva's halo is centrally placed. However, the god's head, while still surrounded by the halo, is off-center. Umā's head is tipped so that it is outside the halo's radiance. Above the halo is a stylized floral form that may represent a *chattra* (umbrella) with pearl festoons.

The image was probably made around the tenth century and may have been created in a workshop in the Bengal region (West Bengal, India, or Bangladesh), possibly western or central Bengal (Vardhamāna or Vaṅga). Its style is unusual for this late date in the very thin, wiry treatment of the bodies of Śiva and Umā and their pointy facial features. The very freely rendered details, particularly the elements of the backslab, impart a lively animation to the work and suggest an aesthetic that might arise from modeling in wax or clay rather than chiseling in stone. This quality may also be observed in a number of images from the Bengal region, but is not particularly characteristic of any of the carving idioms in Bihar.<sup>3</sup>

#### PUBLISHED:

Jane Anne Casey, ed., *Medieval Sculpture from Eastern India: Selections from the Nalin Collection* (Livingston, New Jersey: Nalini International Publications, 1985), 46, no. 21.

1. In Buddhism, the female is considered to embody transcendental wisdom (*prajñā*), while the male embodies activating liberative techniques (*upāya*), both of which are necessary for attainment of the Buddhist goal. In Hinduism, this duality is described in terms of *prakṛti* (the feminine, creative, and activating principle) and *puruṣa* ("man," the latent masculine principle). The term *śakti* is also used in Hinduism to denote the feminine energy and power that activates the masculine principle.
2. For an outstanding discussion of the role of *darśana* in the religious practices of South Asia, see Diana L. Eck, *Darśan, Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Chambersburg, Pa., Anima Books: 1981).
3. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 220-223.

19

#### ŚĀKYAMUNI BUDDHA'S FIRST SERMON (DHARMACAKRA PRAVARTANA [SETTING IN MOTION THE WHEEL OF LAW])

Probably India, Bihar, Nālandā

Ca. late tenth or early eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 24 3/4" W: 15 3/4" D: 5 7/8"

Mr. and Mrs. James W. Alsdorf, Chicago

This handsome sculpture, with its crisply carved details, is likely to have been made in a workshop in the vicinity of the great Buddhist monastery of Nālandā, where, if one may surmise from the numbers of images that have been found nearby, an active artistic community flourished during the Pāla period.<sup>1</sup> The fact that so many of the surviving images from Nālandā are of extremely high technical and aesthetic quality suggests the presence of well-established, professional artisans who were employed in the service of wealthy patrons and donors.

The central figure of a Buddha sits atop a lotus pedestal that in turn rests upon a lion throne. Behind the figure, the upright portion of the throne back is visible, and a bunting hangs from each side of the throne's crossbar. Surrounding the head of the Buddha is a halo bearing a Sanskrit inscription of the Buddhist consecratory formula.<sup>2</sup> Atop the crossbars of the throne and flanking the Buddha's head is a pair of *stūpas*. Above the halo, an umbrella (*chattra*) serves as a canopy of honor and symbolic protection above the Buddha's head.

The paleography of the inscription and the style of the image indicate a date in the late tenth or perhaps early eleventh century. The proportions of the Buddha's body, the shape of the distinctive halo with its tapered bottom, and the form of the lotus petals of the lotus pedestal are very close to these elements in an image of a Buddha from the reign of King Mahipāla (I) of about that date.<sup>3</sup> The slight suggestion of a point at the top of the stele anticipates the developments of the late Pāla period, when the pointed shape became prevalent. However, the image still retains close ties with works of the early Pāla period.

The Buddha wears his robe so that it covers both shoulders. The folds of the robe are depicted by incised lines across the garment, but the garment is clingy and reveals the shape of the Buddha's body. Some Pāla period images do not have folds on the garments but are simply smooth in the manner of the Gupta period Sārnāth style. In this image, the Buddha is distinguished by what had become standard features of his iconography, including an *ūrṇā*, an *uṣṇīṣa*, distended earlobes, and a hair style of tight curls. His palm-outward hand reveals the inscribed *cakra* and the webbing between his fingers that were among the *lakṣaṇas* (auspicious signs) on his body at birth.

The subject of this relief is easily identified as the first

sermon of Śākyamuni Buddha, which he performed at the Deer Park (Mṛgadāva) at Sārnāth. In this sermon, the Buddha is said to have turned the Wheel of (Buddhist) Law into motion. Both the *dharmacakra mudrā* displayed by the Buddha's hands and the pair of deer flanking a Buddhist wheel in the front center of the pedestal are indicative of this subject. The *dharmacakra mudrā* ("law-wheel" gesture) has a number of variations but is always performed with two hands; in one of its most typical forms, as here, the left hand has the palm turned inward while the right palm faces the devotee. A circle formed by the index finger and thumb of the right hand suggests the concept of the Buddhist wheel and at the same time points to one of the fingers of the left hand, signifying the specific teaching. The wheel flanked by the two deer is the "wheel of Dharma" set in motion by the Buddha's sermon. On the exoteric level, the two deer are reminders of the fact that the sermon was performed at the Mṛgadāva (Deer Park). However, as is generally true in Indic religious symbolism, another more esoteric level of meaning is also present. The term *mṛga* means deer, fawn, antelope, gazelle, ibex, or even simply animal, or beast; the term *mṛg* means "to hunt," while *mṛ* is the root for "to cause death." The presence of these hunted, easily frightened animals at the feet of the Buddha would thus seem to symbolize the overcoming of (the fear of) death. The term *dāva* indicates distress. Literally, then, the Buddha's first sermon occurred in the place where death-distress was overcome.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the message of the Buddha's first sermon, codified into the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path,<sup>5</sup> was the understanding of the ephemeral, changing nature of all things and the inevitability of death as a necessary part of the chain of causation.

The *Majjhima-nikāya* records the Buddha's reluctance to share this message with others, for he believed that it would be "unrecognized by those slaves of passion who are cloaked in the mire of ignorance."<sup>6</sup> But he agreed to teach his Dharma to "trainable men," specifically the five ascetics with whom he had practiced austerities during his six years of wandering in the forests while seeking enlightenment. Though sometimes depicted in art, the five ascetics are not included here.

Thus the ministry phase of Śākyamuni's life was begun.

1. For discussion of the Nālandā school, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 108-116, 134-141.

2. See cat. no. 1. Dr. B. N. Mukherjee identifies the script as proto-Bengali or Gaudī of the very late tenth or eleventh century.

3. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 54.

4. As first explained by John C. Huntington in Huntington and Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, 632 n. 14.

5. The Four Noble Truths are: all life is suffering; suffering is caused by desire; the cessation of suffering may be achieved through the cessation of desire; and to cease desire, one must follow the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path consists of right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

6. *Majjhima-nikāya* 1.168, trans. I. B. Horner, cited by John C. Huntington in "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus, A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism," part 2, *Orientalism* 17, no. 2 (Feb. 1986), 28.

## 20

### SŪRYA, THE SUN GOD

Probably Bangladesh, possibly Chittagong (formerly Comilla) District

Ca. late tenth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 36" W: 20" D: 5"

Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection (45.59)

With the exception of a few elements, this image is identical in iconography to the Sūrya image in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (cat. no. 10) and similarly represents a midpoint in the evolution of Sūrya's iconography in the Pāla idiom. Sūrya, standing frontally and unflexed, holds clusters of lotus buds and blossoms in his two hands. He is accompanied by Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, by two of his wives, and by Uṣas and Aruṇa, as well as two female archers and a pair of *vidyādhara*s. Unlike the example in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (cat. no. 10), in this case Sūrya's two wives carry fly whisks (*cauris*) in their right hands and blue lotuses (*nīlotpala*) in their left hands; the two female archers aim their bows from the front corners of the god's chariots rather than flying alongside it; and the seven steeds of Sūrya's chariot are not accompanied by renderings of serpents, nor is the central horse front-facing.

The image was probably made in the late tenth century, as suggested by comparison to works dated in the reigns of King Gopāla II (ca. 967-987)<sup>1</sup> and King Mahipāla I (ca. 992-1042).<sup>2</sup> In particular, the treatment of the edge of the backslab, which also serves as the design of Sūrya's halo, consists of an outer motif that represents rays of light and an inner twisted garland of gems that was popular at that time. The hint of a point at the top of the stele anticipates the later Pāla developments of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, while the general rounded shape of earlier imagery of the ninth and tenth centuries is retained.

The provenance of the image is difficult to assess, since sculptures with many of the same stylistic characteristics have been found at sites as far west as Shahabad District in Bihar and as far east as Chittagong District in Bangladesh. In particular, the treatment of the edge of the backslab with its outer *prabhā* motif and inner twisted garland is commonly seen in tenth- and early eleventh-century works throughout the Pāla regions.<sup>3</sup> However, because of the variance of iconography of such images, it is difficult to find comparative elements to study, such as the headdress, costume, jewelry, facial



types, and attendant figures. It is possible that the piece originated in Bengal, not Bihar, and may have been made in the Chittagong District region. Although the style may have had a specific place of origination, probably in Bihar, it apparently had spread throughout the Pāla kingdom by the time of kings Gopāla II and Mahīpāla I.

#### PUBLISHED:

*Annual Report of the Seattle Art Museum* (1945), 8, 23, fig. 1; Los Angeles County Museum, *Art of Greater India, 3000 B.C.-1800 A.D.* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum, 1950), 28-29, no. 48 and fig. 48; Henry Trubner, William Jay Rathbun, Catherine A. Kaputa, *Asiatic Art in the Seattle Art Museum, A Selection and Catalogue* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1973), 95, no. 13; Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, part 1, *Sculpture* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1974), 144, fig. 255.

1. See, for example, S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 49 and 50.
2. See, for example, S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 53.
3. For example, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 49, 50, 53, 90, and 207.

21

#### DANCING GAṆEŚĀ (NṚTTA [NṚTYA] GAṆEŚĀ)

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 20 3/4" W: 10 1/2" D: 3 1/2"

Courtesy of Denver Art Museum, Gift in memory of Mrs. McIntosh Buell (1983.12)

As the "Overcomer of Obstacles," Gaṇeśa is one of the most auspicious and beloved gods in Hinduism.<sup>1</sup> Invoked at the beginning of worship or any other venture, such as the start of the business day or a journey, Gaṇeśa's name is on the lips of virtually every devout Hindu on a daily basis. His image generally appears as the first in a sequence of sculptures in an iconographic program<sup>2</sup> or in a series of religious paintings. His *mantra*, the syllable OM occurs as the first word of virtually every invocation and prayer.

On the mundane level, Gaṇeśa is invoked for material rewards, but on an esoteric level, the impediments he helps the devotee overcome are those characteristics or failings that hinder spiritual attainment. His name literally means "Lord of Gaṇas" and refers to his role as superintendent of the *gaṇas* (flock, troop, or multitude). Although *gaṇas* are often described and depicted as plump, dwarflike figures, the term *gaṇa* also means "category" and in this context refers to all that can be counted or comprehended.<sup>3</sup> While categorization is fundamental to

one's ability to function in the physical world, categories represent the greatest obstacle to spiritual attainment, for they are based on concepts of differentiation whereas the Universal is undifferentiated. To overcome the belief in the category of self, that is, one's own separateness and individuality, is the ultimate obstacle that Gaṇeśa can help overcome. Gaṇeśa's many epithets and variations on his names reflect this role and include Gaṇapati, which also means "Lord of Gaṇas," Vināyaka (Remover [of Obstacles]), and Vighneśvara (Lord of Obstacles).

Technically, Gaṇeśa is said to have an elephant's head and a human body, but generally his upright body is corpulent and elephantlike in form as well. Here he is shown in a dancing (*nṛtta* or *nṛtya*) mode, although most commonly he appears in a standing or sitting posture. Gaṇeśa has one tusk (*ekadanta*), the other having been broken off, and a bent trunk, which may point to the left or right. In his dancing mode he customarily has eight arms, as seen here. The attributes and gestures of his proper right hands are the broken tusk (*danta*), axe (*kūṭhāra*), gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*), and an unidentified *mudrā* made by a circle formed by the index finger and thumb; his left hands show an unidentified *mudrā*, a bunch of radishes (*mūlaka*), sweetmeats (*modaka* or *laḍḍu*)—for which he is reaching with his trunk, and what appears to be an archer's bow (*dhanu*).

Gaṇeśa's vehicle (*vāhana*), the rat or mouse (*ākhu*), appears on the pedestal slightly to the left of the lotus pedestal upon which Gaṇeśa dances. The *ākhu* is a creature that forces its way through obstacles and thus is an appropriate mount for the Overcomer of Obstacles. Another name for the rat/mouse vehicle is *mūṣaka* (or *mūṣika*), meaning "robber" or "thief," referring to the way a mouse carries away food and other things for its own use. This connotation of Gaṇeśa's vehicle has been associated with Gaṇeśa's role as a lord of the harvest who overcomes the pestilence of the field mice that steal and destroy crops.<sup>4</sup> It has also been suggested that the mouse is the master of the inside of things and therefore symbolizes the all-pervading Universal, which dwells within every living being.<sup>5</sup> The incongruous notion of an enormous elephant riding atop a tiny rodent must also be part of the symbolism implied by the association of these two creatures, though this aspect of the symbolism has not been explored.

Hindu literature includes numerous conflicting accounts explaining the birth or creation of Gaṇeśa, but he is generally accepted as a son of Pārvatī, sometimes said to have been born with or without the aid of her husband Śiva. Gaṇeśa's wives are Siddhi (Success) and Ṛddhi (Prosperity), suggesting the rewards that are gained when obstacles are overcome.

In this relief, Gaṇeśa is accompanied by two seated musicians; the one on the left plays a drum while the one on the right plays a pair of cymbals. The pedestal contains

a small figure of a devotee at the right. Near the top of the stele, a pair of *vidyādhara*s brings garlands, while the crowning element in the composition is a cluster of radishes.

The image was probably created in the eleventh century, as may be inferred from elements such as the detailing of the petals of the lotus pedestal, the god's tall and elaborate hair style and headdress, and the pointed shape of his halo. The image lacks distinguishing characteristics that might help determine whether it was made in the Bihar or Bengal region.

1. Gaṇeśa has been the subject of a number of studies. For the best overview and bibliography, see Paul B. Courtright, *Gaṇeśa: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). For Gaṇeśa's iconography and imagery, see Alice Getty's classic work, *Gaṇeśa, A Monograph of the Elephant-Faced God* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936).
2. For the identification and explanation of what may be the earliest use of an image of Gaṇeśa in an extant iconographic program, see Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 190-191.
3. Alain Daniélou, *Hindu Polytheism*, Bollingen Series, no. 73 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), 291.
4. Getty, *Gaṇeśa*, 16.
5. Daniélou, *Hindu Polytheism*, 296.

22

## PILLAR CAPITAL WITH DOUBLE IMAGE OF GARUḌA

Probably West Bengal, India, or Bangladesh (possibly ancient Vaṅga or Vardhamāna regions)

Ca. mid-to-late eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 22 5/8" W: 15" D: 11"

Collection of Dr. David Nalin

The practice of erecting freestanding stone pillars with decorated capitals can be traced in India to at least the Maurya period (ca. 323-185 B.C.),<sup>1</sup> but wooden examples must have been created even earlier. Every detail of such pillars was imbued with symbolism, including the motifs employed in the decoration of both the capitals and the shafts. The latter, as metaphors for the sacred *axis mundi*, or "world axis," were seen as an instrument that linked heaven and earth.

Early pillars, such as the Maurya period examples, were apparently erected independently as complete works of art, but at an early date freestanding pillars were associated with religious structures in a practice that has continued throughout the centuries in South Asia. In particular, temples dedicated to the god Viṣṇu commonly have freestanding pillars preceding them, generally topped with a depiction of Viṣṇu's mount, the bird-man Garuḍa. Such pillars, called Garuḍadhvaja (Garuḍa banner) or Garuḍastambha (Garuḍa pillar) are found throughout India and, following the Indic tradition, in Nepal. The capital illustrated here must have once adorned such a

pillar at a Vaiṣṇava temple in Bengal. The earliest known example of a Garuḍadhvaja in India is the so-called "Heliodorus pillar" at Vidiśā (Besnagar) in central India, dating from the late second century B.C., which was erected near the remains of an elliptical structure, presumably a Viṣṇu temple.<sup>2</sup> Garuḍa pillars continued to be erected in association with Viṣṇu temples, probably mostly in wood and therefore no longer surviving, as may be surmised from the preservation of examples in stone intermittently in Indic history. For example, at Eran a Garuḍa pillar associated with Vaiṣṇava temples was erected during the Gupta period.<sup>3</sup>

Since images of Viṣṇu from Pāla period Bengal abound, it may be inferred that Viṣṇu temples were virtually ubiquitous in the region. Made of bricks, or perhaps wood, bamboo, and other perishable materials, such structures have vanished almost without a trace, leaving only the stone images that once adorned them. Based on the survival of sculpted capitals such as this one, it may be surmised that the practice of erecting freestanding pillars preceding such temples was fairly widespread during the Pāla period.

Garuḍa capitals typically carry two back-to-back representations of Garuḍa; one image of Garuḍa faced the visitor arriving at the temple, while the other faced the temple itself. The figures may be identical or, as here, mirror-image depictions. In this example, Garuḍa kneels on his right knee on one side of the capital and on his left knee on the other. Garuḍa is sometimes shown in a standing pose or, more typically, kneeling in devotion, as seen here. His two hands are pressed palms together at his chest in the *añjali mudrā*, the gesture of devotion. As a part-bird, part-human creature, Garuḍa is generally shown with some characteristics of each creature; here, the essentially human figure is given the birdlike features of a beak and wings.

Crowned and bejewelled like a princely figure, Garuḍa is also ornamented with serpents, for example on his armlets, signifying his role as a natural enemy of the serpent (*nāga*). As a solar deity, his head is sometimes surrounded by solar symbols, such as the wheel (*cakra*),<sup>4</sup> although here his hair radiates out from his head in a halolike form, its coiled tendrils suggesting the rays of light from the sun.

The comparative simplicity of the rendering of the jewelry and lotus pedestal indicates that the image was not a product of a northern Bengal workshop, nor does it conform to stylistic patterns of sculptures from southeastern Bengal. Instead, the pillar capital is most likely to have been the product of an atelier in either central Bengal (Vaṅga) or western Bengal (Vardhamāna).

PUBLISHED:

Jane Anne Casey, ed. *Medieval Sculpture from Eastern India: Selections from the Nalin Collection* (Livingston, New Jersey: Nalini International Publications, 1985), 89, no. 59.

1. For a study of early pillars and their capitals, see John Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars: a reassessment of the evidence," *The Burlington Magazine* 115 (Nov. 1973), 706-720; "'Aśokan' Pillars: a reassessment of the evidence, Part II: Structure," *The Burlington Magazine* 116 (Dec. 1974): 712-727; "'Aśokan' Pillars: a reassessment of the evidence, Part III: Capitals," *The Burlington Magazine* 117 (Oct. 1975): 631-643; "'Aśokan' Pillars: a reassessment of the evidence, Part IV: Symbolism," *The Burlington Magazine* 118 (Nov. 1976): 734-753.
2. See J. Ph. Vogel, "The Garuda Pillar of Besnagar," *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1908-9* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1912), 126-129; John Irwin, "The Heliodorus Pillar: A Fresh Approach," *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 6 (1974): 1-13.
3. John Faithfull Fleet, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 3 (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1888; reprint, Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1963), 88-90.
4. For example, see the pillar capital at Eran cited above. For a photograph, see Huntington and Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, fig. 10.13.

23

## THE JAIN TĪRTHAMKARA PĀRŚVA(NĀTHA)

Possibly Bangladesh, Dhaka District

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 23 1/4" W: 10 1/2" D: 3"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery

Brundage Collection (B63 S21+)

The twenty-third Tīrthamkara (ford-finder, or crossing-maker; also Jina, "victor") of the Jain religion, Pārśva (or Pārśvanātha, "Lord Pārśva") may be identified by the snake canopy above his head. The son of the king and queen of Kāśī (Vārāṇasī, i.e., Benares), his mother is said to have seen a serpent by her side during her pregnancy and thus named her child Pārśva (side, or flank). While Pārśva's association with the serpent might relate to this prebirth story, it is more likely linked with a later event when, already an enlightened being, he was protected from the heat of the sun by a serpent king who formed a canopy over him and held an umbrella above his head. In this relief, the snake canopy and umbrella above his head are clear indications of this latter association.

Jain Tīrthamkaras technically are not divinities but rather exemplars who show the way to "cross over" from mundane life to spiritual liberation. Ascetics one and all, the twenty-four Tīrthamkaras in the Jain tradition are thought to be historical personages, the earliest of whom probably lived in prehistoric times.

Pārśvanātha, who may have lived as early as the ninth or as late as the seventh century B.C., married in his

youth but was converted to the religious path at the age of thirty, after having seen a picture of the twenty-second Tīrthamkara, Nemi. Abandoning the material world by giving away his possessions, he plucked out his hair, assumed the state of homelessness, and entered a hermitage. After meditating for eighty-three days while seated under a *dhataki* tree, he attained perfect knowledge. At the age of one hundred, Pārśva died of voluntary starvation in a practice associated with the Jain religious tradition.

Often considered to be the "true" founder of Jainism, Pārśvanātha is credited with having established a cenobitic or monastic community to propagate his doctrines and for establishing the four vows: *ahiṃsā* (non-harm), *sūnṛita* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), and *brahmacarya* (sexual abstinence).<sup>1</sup> Pārśva did not demand nudity of his followers, in contrast with the Jain practices associated with Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Tīrthamkara, and later Jains of the sky-clad (Digambara) sect. Instead, his followers were probably clad in white cotton and formed the Śvetāmbara sect. Although at first glance the figure in this image appears to be nude, fine lines incised at the neck and waist indicate that he is clothed.

The Jain religion is one of South Asia's major religious traditions, but, unlike Hinduism and Buddhism, it never achieved widespread popularity except in certain regions of the subcontinent. Unlike Buddhism, its precepts and practices were not exported to other regions of Asia. Examples of Jain art are known from the Pāla period, as clearly seen in this sculpture; however, such images constitute only a tiny fraction of the extant Pāla period sculptures and, presumably, of the original corpus as well. Within the Pāla kingdom, Jainism was most prominent in the ancient Magadha region of what is now Bihar State in India, for it was there that Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth (and last) Jain Tīrthamkara lived as a contemporary of Śākyamuni Buddha. This region thus became a kind of holy land for Jains, much as it was for Buddhists. Therefore, it is puzzling that Jain art was not more prevalent during the Pāla period.

In this relief, Pārśva appears in a standing meditation pose known as *kāyotsarga*, characterized by the firmly planted feet, unbent knees, and unbent arms positioned so that they do not touch the body. The Tīrthamkara stands atop a double lotus pedestal, the details of which indicate that the carving was made around the eleventh century. A date in the late Pāla period is further indicated by the pointed stele top and the thrice-bent (*tribhaṅga*) postures of the two attendant figures.

The emphasis on spiritual perfection and asceticism in Jainism and Buddhism has led to the striking similarity of a number of features in the depictions of Tīrthamkaras and Buddhas. For example, like a Buddha, Pārśva has distended earlobes, with stretched loops devoid of earrings,

signifying the abandonment of his early princely life when his ears were adorned with jewelry. Similarly, the snail-shell curls of the hair and the *uṣṇīṣa* atop the head are conventional features shared with Buddhist art.

Pārśvanātha is flanked by a pair of male figures, each holding a *caurī* (fly-whisk). Beneath his lotus pedestal are two serpent deities and three kneeling human devotees, all performing a gesture of devotion (*añjali mudrā*). A throne back behind the central figure consists of a crossbar and the leogryph-atop-elephant motif that is seen popularly in Pāla period art. Above the crossbar are geese (*hamsas*), above which are flying *vidyādhara*s (bearers of wisdom) carrying garlands toward the figure of Pārśva.

The provenance of the image is difficult to assess. However, the similarity of the facial features and body treatment of the central figure to depictions of Buddhas from the vicinity of modern Dhaka suggest that it may have been produced in a workshop in that region. The planar treatment of the volumes of the face and the depiction of the eyes and eyebrows by incised lines are particularly comparable.<sup>2</sup>

The inscription on the pedestal has been read as *Upaṭala svage* (left section) *vruvo* (right section), meaning "Let Upaṭala speak in heaven."<sup>3</sup>

#### PUBLISHED:

René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé and Terese Tse, *India and South-East Asian Stone Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1969), 76-77, no. 33; *Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 14.

1. This and some other information about Pārśva has been summarized from Benjamin Walker, *Hindu World, An Encyclopedic Survey of Hinduism*, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1968), vol. 2, 191. For a detailed explanation of Pārśvanātha and his iconography, see also Umakant P. Shah, *Jaina-Rūpa-Maṇḍana (Jaina Iconography)* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1987), vol. 1, 170-187.
2. For example, compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 208.
3. Reading by Dr. B. N. Mukherjee. Dr. Mukherjee identifies the language as incorrect Sanskrit and the script as proto-Bengali or Gauḍi of the eleventh or twelfth century.

#### 24

#### THE GODDESS CĀMUṆḌĀ (CĀMUṆḌĪ)

Found in Bangladesh, Rajshahi (formerly Bogra) District (northern Bengal)

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 23" W: 11" D: 3"

Carol F. Music

Cāmuṇḍā is a fierce (*ugra*) form of the goddess Durgā. Her

name is a contraction of the names of the two demons (*asuras*) she was created to destroy, Caṇḍa (Violent) and Muṇḍa (Skull or Severed Head). The story of her victory over these demons is related in detail in the Devī Mahātmyam section of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*.<sup>1</sup> Although the date of the Devī Mahātmyam is unknown, it was certainly in existence by the Gupta period and must have been well known by Pāla times.

The Devī Mahātmyam is one of the most important texts relating to the cult of Devī (the Goddess) in India. Although Devī has countless names and forms, she is most commonly Durgā, who is one of the foremost embodiments of *śakti* worship, that is, devotion to the female principle and its energy. The term *śakti* is believed to derive from the verb *śak*, meaning "to be strong or powerful," and is used both to refer to the individual feminine counterparts of the male deities of the Hindu pantheon and as a general term for the female principle and its activating energies. Śākta worship became especially popular in Bengal during the Pāla period and remains the focus of much religious practice in the region today.

In the Devī Mahātmyam, the glorious exploits of Durgā (who is called by many names in the text) are related by the sage Mārkaṇḍeya. The text is divided into three parts, each of which records a separate episode. In the first part, Durgā is instrumental in awakening Viṣṇu from his deep sleep, thereby enabling him to destroy the demons (*asuras*) Madhu and Kaiṭabha. In the next section, Durgā defeats the demon Mahiṣa in what has become one of her most famous exploits.<sup>2</sup> It is in the third section that she destroys a number of other demons, including Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, and is thereby given the name Cāmuṇḍā.

As is generally true in Indic religious texts, knowing the details of the story alone is insufficient for understanding its spiritual significance. In the case of the Devī Mahātmyam, the telling of the three stories of the Goddess' exploits is occasioned by a request to a sage made by two individuals, both of whom were seeking to understand their present conditions. One, a king named Suratha, had been driven from his kingdom by his corrupt ministers; the other, a man named Samādhi, had been cast out of his home by his ungrateful family. In questioning why, even in their miseries, they remained attached to the very sources of their miseries, the sage explains that Divine Power can cast a veil of illusion even over the minds of the learned. So compelling is this great illusion (*mahāmāyā*) that it ensnares humans in the cycle of transmigration (*saṃsāra*), wherein they continue to remain attached to the sources of their misery. In reply to their question "Who is she, this Divine Power?", the sage related the nature of Durgā and how and why she appears.

At the end of the Devī Mahātmyam, the sage advises Suratha and Samādhi to take refuge in the Goddess. Suratha then prays for a kingdom that he will rule justly, while



PUBLISHED:

Jane Anne Casey, ed. *Medieval Sculpture from Eastern India: Selections from the Nalin Collection* (Livingston, New Jersey: Nalini International Publications, 1985), 89, no. 59.

1. For a study of early pillars and their capitals, see John Irwin, " 'Aśoka' Pillars: a reassessment of the evidence," *The Burlington Magazine* 115 (Nov. 1973), 706-720; " 'Aśoka' Pillars: a reassessment of the evidence, Part II: Structure," *The Burlington Magazine* 116 (Dec. 1974): 712-727; " 'Aśoka' Pillars: a reassessment of the evidence, Part III: Capitals," *The Burlington Magazine* 117 (Oct. 1975): 631-643; " 'Aśoka' Pillars: a reassessment of the evidence, Part IV: Symbolism," *The Burlington Magazine* 118 (Nov. 1976): 734-753.
2. See J. Ph. Vogel, "The Garuda Pillar of Besnagar," *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1908-9* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1912), 126-129; John Irwin, "The Heliodorus Pillar: A Fresh Approach," *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 6 (1974): 1-13.
3. John Faithfull Fleet, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 3 (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1888; reprint, Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1963), 88-90.
4. For example, see the pillar capital at Eran cited above. For a photograph, see Huntington and Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, fig. 10.13.

23

## THE JAIN TĪRTHAMKARA PĀRŚVA(NĀTHA)

Possibly Bangladesh, Dhaka District

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 23 1/4" W: 10 1/2" D: 3"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery

Brundage Collection (B63 S21+)

The twenty-third Tīrthamkara (ford-finder, or crossing-maker; also Jina, "victor") of the Jain religion, Pārśva (or Pārśvanātha, "Lord Pārśva") may be identified by the snake canopy above his head. The son of the king and queen of Kāśī (Vārāṇasī, i.e., Benares), his mother is said to have seen a serpent by her side during her pregnancy and thus named her child Pārśva (side, or flank). While Pārśva's association with the serpent might relate to this prebirth story, it is more likely linked with a later event when, already an enlightened being, he was protected from the heat of the sun by a serpent king who formed a canopy over him and held an umbrella above his head. In this relief, the snake canopy and umbrella above his head are clear indications of this latter association.

Jain Tīrthamkaras technically are not divinities but rather exemplars who show the way to "cross over" from mundane life to spiritual liberation. Ascetics one and all, the twenty-four Tīrthamkaras in the Jain tradition are thought to be historical personages, the earliest of whom probably lived in prehistoric times.

Pārśvanātha, who may have lived as early as the ninth or as late as the seventh century B.C., married in his

youth but was converted to the religious path at the age of thirty, after having seen a picture of the twenty-second Tīrthamkara, Nemi. Abandoning the material world by giving away his possessions, he plucked out his hair, assumed the state of homelessness, and entered a hermitage. After meditating for eighty-three days while seated under a *dhataki* tree, he attained perfect knowledge. At the age of one hundred, Pārśva died of voluntary starvation in a practice associated with the Jain religious tradition.

Often considered to be the "true" founder of Jainism, Pārśvanātha is credited with having established a cenobitic or monastic community to propagate his doctrines and for establishing the four vows: *ahiṃsā* (non-harm), *sūnṛita* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), and *brahmacarya* (sexual abstinence).<sup>1</sup> Pārśva did not demand nudity of his followers, in contrast with the Jain practices associated with Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Tīrthamkara, and later Jains of the sky-clad (Digambara) sect. Instead, his followers were probably clad in white cotton and formed the Śvetāmbara sect. Although at first glance the figure in this image appears to be nude, fine lines incised at the neck and waist indicate that he is clothed.

The Jain religion is one of South Asia's major religious traditions, but, unlike Hinduism and Buddhism, it never achieved widespread popularity except in certain regions of the subcontinent. Unlike Buddhism, its precepts and practices were not exported to other regions of Asia. Examples of Jain art are known from the Pāla period, as clearly seen in this sculpture; however, such images constitute only a tiny fraction of the extant Pāla period sculptures and, presumably, of the original corpus as well. Within the Pāla kingdom, Jainism was most prominent in the ancient Magadha region of what is now Bihar State in India, for it was there that Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth (and last) Jain Tīrthamkara lived as a contemporary of Śākyamuni Buddha. This region thus became a kind of holy land for Jains, much as it was for Buddhists. Therefore, it is puzzling that Jain art was not more prevalent during the Pāla period.

In this relief, Pārśva appears in a standing meditation pose known as *kāyotsarga*, characterized by the firmly planted feet, unbent knees, and unbent arms positioned so that they do not touch the body. The Tīrthamkara stands atop a double lotus pedestal, the details of which indicate that the carving was made around the eleventh century. A date in the late Pāla period is further indicated by the pointed stele top and the thrice-bent (*tribhaṅga*) postures of the two attendant figures.

The emphasis on spiritual perfection and asceticism in Jainism and Buddhism has led to the striking similarity of a number of features in the depictions of Tīrthamkaras and Buddhas. For example, like a Buddha, Pārśva has distended earlobes, with stretched loops devoid of earrings,

signifying the abandonment of his early princely life when his ears were adorned with jewelry. Similarly, the snail-shell curls of the hair and the *uṣṇīṣa* atop the head are conventional features shared with Buddhist art.

Pārśvanātha is flanked by a pair of male figures, each holding a *caurī* (fly-whisk). Beneath his lotus pedestal are two serpent deities and three kneeling human devotees, all performing a gesture of devotion (*añjali mudrā*). A throne back behind the central figure consists of a crossbar and the leogryph-atop-elephant motif that is seen popularly in Pāla period art. Above the crossbar are geese (*haṁsas*), above which are flying *vidyādhara*s (bearers of wisdom) carrying garlands toward the figure of Pārśva.

The provenance of the image is difficult to assess. However, the similarity of the facial features and body treatment of the central figure to depictions of Buddhas from the vicinity of modern Dhaka suggest that it may have been produced in a workshop in that region. The planar treatment of the volumes of the face and the depiction of the eyes and eyebrows by incised lines are particularly comparable.<sup>2</sup>

The inscription on the pedestal has been read as *Upaṭala svage* (left section) *vruvo* (right section), meaning "Let Upaṭala speak in heaven."<sup>3</sup>

PUBLISHED:

René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé and Terese Tse, *India and South-East Asian Stone Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1969), 76-77, no. 33; *Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 14.

1. This and some other information about Pārśva has been summarized from Benjamin Walker, *Hindu World, An Encyclopedic Survey of Hinduism*, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1968), vol. 2, 191. For a detailed explanation of Pārśvanātha and his iconography, see also Umakant P. Shah, *Jaina-Rūpa-Manḍana (Jaina Iconography)* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1987), vol. 1, 170-187.
2. For example, compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 208.
3. Reading by Dr. B. N. Mukherjee. Dr. Mukherjee identifies the language as incorrect Sanskrit and the script as proto-Bengali or Gauḍī of the eleventh or twelfth century.

24

## THE GODDESS CĀMUṆḌĀ (CĀMUṆḌĪ)

Found in Bangladesh, Rajshahi (formerly Bogra) District (northern Bengal)

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 23" W: 11" D: 3"

Carol F. Music

Cāmuṇḍā is a fierce (*ugra*) form of the goddess Durgā. Her

name is a contraction of the names of the two demons (*asuras*) she was created to destroy, Caṇḍa (Violent) and Muṇḍa (Skull or Severed Head). The story of her victory over these demons is related in detail in the Devī Mahātmyam section of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*.<sup>1</sup> Although the date of the Devī Mahātmyam is unknown, it was certainly in existence by the Gupta period and must have been well known by Pāla times.

The Devī Mahātmyam is one of the most important texts relating to the cult of Devī (the Goddess) in India. Although Devī has countless names and forms, she is most commonly Durgā, who is one of the foremost embodiments of *śakti* worship, that is, devotion to the female principle and its energy. The term *śakti* is believed to derive from the verb *śak*, meaning "to be strong or powerful," and is used both to refer to the individual feminine counterparts of the male deities of the Hindu pantheon and as a general term for the female principle and its activating energies. Śakta worship became especially popular in Bengal during the Pāla period and remains the focus of much religious practice in the region today.

In the Devī Mahātmyam, the glorious exploits of Durgā (who is called by many names in the text) are related by the sage Mārkaṇḍeya. The text is divided into three parts, each of which records a separate episode. In the first part, Durgā is instrumental in awakening Viṣṇu from his deep sleep, thereby enabling him to destroy the demons (*asuras*) Madhu and Kaiṭabha. In the next section, Durgā defeats the demon Mahiṣa in what has become one of her most famous exploits.<sup>2</sup> It is in the third section that she destroys a number of other demons, including Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, and is thereby given the name Cāmuṇḍā.

As is generally true in Indic religious texts, knowing the details of the story alone is insufficient for understanding its spiritual significance. In the case of the Devī Mahātmyam, the telling of the three stories of the Goddess' exploits is occasioned by a request to a sage made by two individuals, both of whom were seeking to understand their present conditions. One, a king named Suratha, had been driven from his kingdom by his corrupt ministers; the other, a man named Samādhi, had been cast out of his home by his ungrateful family. In questioning why, even in their miseries, they remained attached to the very sources of their miseries, the sage explains that Divine Power can cast a veil of illusion even over the minds of the learned. So compelling is this great illusion (*mahāmāyā*) that it ensnares humans in the cycle of transmigration (*saṁsāra*), wherein they continue to remain attached to the sources of their misery. In reply to their question "Who is she, this Divine Power?", the sage related the nature of Durgā and how and why she appears.

At the end of the Devī Mahātmyam, the sage advises Suratha and Samādhi to take refuge in the Goddess. Suratha then prays for a kingdom that he will rule justly, while

Samādhi requests from the Goddess only spiritual liberation. Since both receive their boons, the story demonstrates the value of two possible paths towards liberation, one in which divine work is performed amidst the activities of the world and the other in which all efforts are directed toward spiritual attainment. Perhaps because of the success of each supplicant in the text, the Devī Mahātmyam is often invoked by Hindus for help in removing obstacles or in gaining some object for personal satisfaction.

On a deeper level, the text provides an allegory for the liberation of human consciousness from the snare of illusion (*māyā*). Specifically, the Cāmuṇḍā episode symbolizes the destructiveness of egoism and ambition. The *asuras* specifically represent the different undesirable tendencies that bar an individual from religious achievement and ultimately are destroyed by the divine power.

Since the Devī Mahātmyam story explains how Cāmuṇḍā's name was bestowed upon her, images of Cāmuṇḍā are inherently references to that story of her victory and its underlying significance. However, Cāmuṇḍā also appears in a number of other contexts in the Hindu religious world. She is often listed as one of the Seven Mothers (*saptamātṛkā*) and frequently appears in sets or groups of images portraying that iconography, and she is almost invariably listed as one of the Nine Durgās (Navadurgā). It is unknown whether this image is from a set of Seven Mothers or Nine Durgās or another context altogether.

A significant number of depictions of Cāmuṇḍā survive from Pāla period Bengal. Based on Cāmuṇḍā's continued popularity in Bengal today, it may be suggested that the cult of Cāmuṇḍā has a lengthy and important history in the region, traceable at least to Pāla times. One aspect of the worship of the Nine Durgās in Bengal is as personifications of the vegetation spirit as manifested in the so-called *navapatrikā* (nine plants). Although the Goddess explains her vegetal character in the Devī Mahātmyam,<sup>3</sup> the specific plants she is associated with and their relation to the Nine Durgās is apparently a later development. The Nine Durgās and their respective plants are: *Brahmāṇī*, *rambhā* (plantain); *Kālikā*, *kacvī* (*Arum colocasia*); *Durgā*, *haridrā* (turmeric); *Kārttikī*, *jayantī* (barley); *Śivā*, *bel* (wood apple); *Raktadantikā*, *dāḍima* (pomegranate); *Śokarahitā*, *aśoka* (*Saraca indica*); *Cāmuṇḍā*, *māna* (rice); and *Lakṣmī*, *dhānya* (rice).<sup>4</sup> It may be suggested that Cāmuṇḍā's special popularity in Bengal may relate to the fact that the region is an important rice-growing area and that her worship was believed to insure abundant crops.

In this image, Cāmuṇḍā appears as a fleshless (*nirmāṃṣā*) skeleton (*kaṅkāli*) and is adorned with a bone necklace and a skull garland (*muṇḍamālā*) that falls across

her thighs. Her frightening appearance is cited in texts, which describe her dried-up flesh, sunken eyes, contracted abdomen, bulging eyes, bared fangs, and hair standing on end, as well as her horrid, laughing manner. She is ten-armed.<sup>5</sup> In four of her left hands, she holds a trident (*triśūla*), a shield (*kheṭaka*), a bow (*dhanu*), and a corpse (*śava*), while the fifth makes a gesture pointing to her mouth with the little finger. Her forward right hand holds a skull cup (*kapāla*), but the attributes in the other right hands are too damaged to be identified.

Cāmuṇḍā dances atop the shoulders of a nude male figure, sometimes described as a plump young boy. He is also dancing, and his left hand performs the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*). Flanking the male figure upon whose shoulders Cāmuṇḍā dances are two smaller dancing skeletons. Behind Cāmuṇḍā is the skin of a flayed elephant (*ajina*), one of her standard symbols.

At the lower right of the pedestal is a representation of an owl (*ulūka* or *pecaka*), one of Cāmuṇḍā's characteristic vehicles. Although the meaning of the owl in Cāmuṇḍā's iconography is unknown, the owl has been seen as a harbinger of ill fortune in Indic culture since early times. In the lower center is a pile of skulls, and at the left of the pedestal are two kneeling devotees. Near the head of the goddess, a pair of *vidyādhara*s proffer garlands, while a *kīrttimukha* mask appears at the top of the stele.

This piece was discovered in Rajshahi (formerly Bogra) District of Bangladesh, along with three other late Pāla period carvings: one of Viṣṇu, one of Umā-Maheśvara, and one of Sarasvatī. The other three images display typical characteristics of the regional style in terms of the shape and treatment of the backslab and details of ornamentation and serve as important documents of the style. However, in this work the edge of the backslab is unornamented and the image has only a minimum of foliate and other details. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the stylistic features of the work in detail.

1. The Devī Mahātmyam section of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* is likely to have been an addendum to the main text. For the full text of the Devī Mahātmyam, see F. Eden Pargiter, trans., *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Bibliotheca Indica: A Collection of Oriental Works Published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1904; reprint, Delhi: Indological Book House, 1969), 465-523 (cantos 81 through 93). For the specific narrative concerning Cāmuṇḍā, see 488-522 (cantos 85 through 92).
2. As slayer of Mahiṣa, Durgā is known as Durgā Mahiṣasuramardini (Durgā Mahiṣa-demon-slayer). Images of this form are popular throughout India and were common in the Pāla artistic repertoire, although it was not possible to include such a work in this exhibit.
3. In the text, Cāmuṇḍā explains that she will support the whole world with life-sustaining vegetables, which will grow out of her body during a period of heavy rain. See Pargiter, *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, 518.
4. Jitendra Nath Banerjee, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1956), 490n.
5. Bhattasali lists eight forms of Cāmuṇḍā and identifies a ten-armed form as Siddha Cāmuṇḍā. However, the attributes held in the hands of the present image do not conform precisely to those listed for Siddha Cāmuṇḍā. See Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum* (Dacca: Dacca Museum Committee, 1929), 209-211.

## MAÑJUŚRĪ KUMĀRA

Probably Bangladesh, central Bengal (ancient Vaṅga) or southeastern Bengal (ancient Samatāṭa)

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 26 1/4" W: 11" D: 2 1/2"

Collection of Dr. David Nalin

Far more elaborate both stylistically and iconographically than the depiction of Mañjuśrī Kumāra already discussed (cat. no. 4), this sculpture represents a clear departure from the early Pāla idiom. Unlike earlier pieces, where the backslabs are almost invariably rounded at the top, this piece was originally carved to a subtle point at the top center. Characteristic of images from the eleventh century and later, the lotus pedestal upon which the Bodhisattva stands is highly ornamented. The main figure also stands in the accentuated thrice-bent (*tribhaṅga*) pose that became so popular in the later Pāla period, with his legs, torso, and head breaking the vertical axis. The treatment of the central figure, detached from the backslab with an open space behind him, also indicates a date in the later Pāla period.

The Bodhisattva's plump legs and somewhat soft, fleshy body, are unusual, but occur on some images found in central Bengal (ancient Vaṅga) and southeastern Bengal (ancient Samatāṭa). Other details of the carving, such as the treatment of the Bodhisattva's necklace, resemble features found in works from Dhaka District and northern Chittagong (formerly Comilla) District in Bangladesh, thus reinforcing the suggestion that the piece may have been made in a workshop in central or southeastern Bengal.<sup>1</sup> Less elaborate and less deeply carved than northern Bengal sculptures, the image has a relatively plain backslab and empty spaces between the iconographic elements.

The delicate facial features and smiling expression give a sweet appearance to the Bodhisattva's face. Mañjuśrī's hair is piled into the *merumukūṭa*, a coiffure that resembles the shape of the cosmic Mount Meru, and his diadem is ornamented with triangular panels. Both the hair style and the headdress appear in Nepali and Tibetan Buddhist art, undoubtedly based on Pāla models such as this. Mañjuśrī wears a knee-length garment and elaborate jewelry, including an ornamented girdle, armlets, anklets, earrings, and necklaces.

Mañjuśrī (Pleasing Splendor), the Bodhisattva of transcendent wisdom, is easily recognized by the blue lotus (*nīlotpala*) he holds in his left hand, atop which rests his characteristic book (*pustaka*), a Prajñāpāramitā (Perfection of Wisdom) text. His right hand hangs down and also grasps a blue lotus. Called Kumāra (boy), the Bodhisattva's youthfulness is indicated by the two tiger claws on his necklace, which are worn as protective

ornaments by male children in India and other parts of Asia.

Flanking Mañjuśrī Kumāra are two smaller male figures. The short, chubby attendant to Mañjuśrī's proper left may be Yamāri, a form of Yamāntaka, who is in turn a *krodha* (fierce) form of Mañjuśrī himself. The figure to the proper right of Mañjuśrī may be Sudhanakumāra (Very Rich Prince),<sup>2</sup> who stands behind a lion, presumably the lion that serves as Mañjuśrī's vehicle. Yamāri (Enemy of Yama [god of death]) is fierce in appearance, as shown by his fangs, bulging eyes, and flaming hair. According to the Mañjuvajra *maṇḍala* described in the *Nispannayogāvalī*, he is considered to be a guardian of the eastern quarter of Mañjuśrī's *maṇḍala* and is blue in color.<sup>3</sup> He holds an axe in his hand. Sudhanakumāra, described as a golden, princelike figure, is depicted as a devotee of Mañjuśrī, with his hands in the *añjali mudrā*.

Halfway up the sides of the stele, two other figures appear. They are both females and may be identified as Keśinī (Hairy) and Upakeśinī (Beside Keśinī). Like Yamāri, these two goddesses appear in *krodha* (fierce) forms, as may be seen in their aggressive *ālīḍha* (jumping) poses.

Flanking Mañjuśrī's head is a pair of *stūpas* and above, at the top center of the stele, is a depiction of a Buddha. Because Mañjuśrī is associated with the Jina Buddha Akṣobhya, one would expect that this figure would be Akṣobhya. However, the figure performs the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*) and offers a gem, clearly indicating that he is Ratnasambhava rather than Akṣobhya, who would perform the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*). Such anomalies often occur in Buddhist art and may be traced to a variety of causes, including contradictory texts, misinterpretation of textual or artistic sources and models, or even variations in emphasis from teacher to teacher in the Buddhist tradition. In a case like this, where the right hand extends down in such a way as to lead to possible confusion between the gestures of Ratnasambhava and Akṣobhya, it seems possible that an artist looking at a model or sketchbook may simply have misinterpreted it.

Three small devotees appear on the pedestal. Their tiny size in relationship to the Bodhisattva and his entourage above is a graphic demonstration of the practice of hierarchic scaling used virtually ubiquitously in Pāla art.

The single-word inscription on the pedestal has been read as *bālo* (young)<sup>4</sup> and may be a reference to the youthful deity that is the subject of the image.

## PUBLISHED:

Jane Anne Casey, ed., *Medieval Sculpture from Eastern India: Selections from the Nalin Collection* (Livingston, New Jersey: Nalini International Publications, 1985), 47, no. 22.



1. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 65 and 67.
2. This interpretation is offered by S. K. Saraswati for a closely related image, but I have been unable to verify independently whether Sudhanakumāra attends Mañjuśrī and might be paired with Yamāri. See S. K. Saraswati, *Tantrayāna Art, An Album* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1977), xix, no. 15.
3. Benoytosh Bhattachacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, Mainly Based on the Sādhana-mālā and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Rituals* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), 252.
4. This reading is by Dr. B. N. Mukherjee, who suggests that the first part of the name or word may be effaced. Dr. Mukherjee identifies the script of the Sanskrit inscription as Siddhamātrkā of the tenth or very early eleventh century.

26

## MAHĀKĀLA

Probably India, Bihar

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 14 1/2" W: 7 7/8" D: 2 5/8"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Paul F.

Walter (M.71.110.3)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

The fierce (*krodha*) god Mahākāla is worshipped to help destroy enemies (of Buddhism) and to inspire awe in those who are not reverential toward their Buddhist teacher (*guru*, literally, "venerable") or the Three Jewels of Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> He is supposed to devour such individuals raw, a process that has been described in detail in a number of *sādhana*s:

"He who hates his preceptor, is adversely disposed to the Three Jewels, and destroys many animals is eaten up raw by Mahākāla.

He (Mahākāla) cuts his flesh to pieces, drinks his blood, and (after) entering into his head breaks it into small pieces."<sup>2</sup>

Although such a deity might seem frightening to the uninitiated, Mahākāla is only fiercely disposed toward those who are the enemies of Buddhism and its basic principles. Unlike a crazed animal or psychopathic criminal, whose wrath and destruction might be wrought upon any defenseless victim, Mahākāla's fierceness is not irrational and uncontrollable. Because it is so specifically targeted, it need not be feared by sincere Buddhist devotees and practitioners.

Mahākāla is described in a number of Buddhist texts. He may have more than one face and many pairs of arms, but here he has a single face and four arms. The objects he holds in his hands symbolize his fierce nature and include the weapons with which he destroys the enemies of Buddhism. In his back right hand he holds a sword (*khaḍga*) and in his back left hand he holds a *khaṭvāṅga*.

The *khaṭvāṅga* is a staff or club usually made of a shin or cubital bone and generally topped by a skull and a trident (*triśūla*), as here. Mahākāla's front left hand holds a skull cup (*kapāla*) that is meant to contain blood. Although his front right hand is damaged, it appears to hold another of Mahākāla's standard attributes, a type of flaying knife known as a *kartrī*.

While these attributes might be used by Mahākāla against the enemies of Buddhism, the Buddhist devotee encountering such an image would also think of these objects as tools of spiritual liberation. The *khaḍga* would be used to destroy one's own ignorance; the *khaṭvāṅga* is a complex symbol referring to one's own enlightenment; the skull cup would be visualized as containing one's own blood, symbolizing the offering of the five senses toward Buddhist perfection; and the flaying knife would be used to strip oneself of ego. As tools rather than weapons, these objects become the facilitators for Buddhist attainment.

Mahākāla's *krodha* nature is recognizable not only by the attributes he displays but by his general appearance. Like many fierce (*krodha*) deities, he is chubby and has dwarflike proportions. He has a beard and mustache usually said to be made of flames, flaming hair, bulging eyes, and a furrowed brow. His ornaments include a garland of skulls (*kapāla-mālā* or *muṇḍa-mālā*) that hangs to his knees and a serpent in his headdress.

Unlike peaceful deities, whose auras are comprised of rays of light, Mahākāla's aura is made of flames. While fire can be a frightening destroyer when uncontrolled, these flames, like the god himself, annihilates only ignorance (*avidyā*), Buddhism's greatest enemy. As the destroyer of ignorance, fire is then also a symbol of knowledge, the final goal of the Buddhist religion. The term for this aura of flames, *mahājñānāgni* (great transcendental insight fire), is thus most fitting.

Mahākāla's name, "Great Black" or "Great Time," provides another clue to his nature and the enemies he destroys. The term *kāla*, meaning both "black" and "time," is used commonly to evoke a dual meaning in Indic literature. Blackness and darkness are associated with destructive forces in Buddhism and Hinduism, and *kāla* is therefore fitting as a name for a god who is a great destroyer. Perhaps even more significant is the meaning of the term *kāla* to suggest the concept of time. Like time, Mahākāla is the great devourer of all that is finite; but time is also eternal. Thus, time embodies the very essence of the notion of duality that is so central to Indic religious thinking, for it is both permanent and impermanent. To understand and become part of the permanent, that is, the infinite or universal, by destroying one's ego (that is, the impermanent) is the essence of the Indic religions. As the personification of these principles, Mahākāla is a richly complex deity, who works with, not against, the devotee who is treading the Buddhist path.

The inscription on the pedestal has been read three times:

Dr. B. N. Mukherjee notes that the text is in incorrect Sanskrit and is written in the proto-Bengali script of about the eleventh century. He transliterates and translates the text as follows: *Devadharmmoyam Chammu (?) paṭanā* (should be *Deyadharmmoyam Chammupattanā*) *Añjanasuta Tarikasya*. This is the religious gift of Tarika, son of Anjana from Chamma(?) pattana (=Champā-pattana?).<sup>3</sup>

Dr. S. P. Tewari identifies the language as Sanskrit and the script as Nāgari of the eleventh or twelfth century. He provided the following transliteration and translation: *Dēva dharmmōyam Āryya-... Arjuna sunu...* (This is the pious gift of the son ... of Āryya Arjuna ... (name not clear)).<sup>4</sup>

Another transliteration and translation has been published by Dr. Gouriswar Bhattacharya: *Siddham* [symbol] *devadharmmo-yaṃ . . . pada-Śoāñjana-sunū-Nanuḍikasyaḥ*. (Success! This is the meritorious gift of Nanuḍika, the son of Śoāñjana.)<sup>5</sup>

Although all three authorities agree on the essence of the inscription, they differ regarding the names of individuals mentioned in the text. In any case, it is clear that the inscription is donative.

On the pedestal is a small human devotee, perhaps the donor of the image, who kneels as if in supplication before Mahākāla and shows his reverence through his hand gesture, the *añjali mudrā*. While such human devotees are common in Buddhist representations, the knowledge that Mahākāla will destroy the nonreverential provides an added poignancy to the devotions of the humble devotee in this composition.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, "Indian Art from the Paul Walter Collection: Catalogue," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* 28, no. 2 (1971), 99; Pratapaditya Pal, *The Sacred and Secular in Indian Art* (Santa Barbara: Department of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1974), 7, 45, no. 4; Pratapaditya Pal, "The Lord of the Tent in Tibetan Paintings," *Pantheon* 35, no. 2 (1977), 101, fig. 7; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2, 700-1800. *A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, 1988), 180, 307, no. 83.

1. The Three Jewels are the Buddha, Dharma (the Buddhist teachings), and *saṅgha* (the Buddhist community [Mahāyāna usage]). Thus, a reference to the Three Jewels is a reference to the whole of Buddhism.
2. Summarized and quoted from Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, Mainly Based on the Sādhana-mālā and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Rituals* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), 347-348.

3. Personal correspondence.
4. Personal correspondence.
5. In Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2, 700-1800. *A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, 1988), 307, no. 83.

27

## MAHĀKĀLA

Probably India, Bihar

Ca. eleventh or twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 23" W: 11 3/4" D: 4 1/2"

Samuel Eilenberg

For discussion and explanation of Mahākāla's symbolism and iconography, see cat. no. 26.

Mahākāla sits in a posture of relaxation, with his right leg tucked up on his lotus seat and the left leg hanging down and resting on a lotus footstool. His attributes and appearance are similar to the previous piece, in which Mahākāla was shown standing. His upper right hand holds the sword (*khaḍga*) and the upper left holds the staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), which is here shown more clearly than in the previous image as having a skull top and trident finial. In his front left hand he holds the skull cup (*kapāla*). The front right hand is broken but is likely to have held the flaying knife (*karṭṛī*).

Mahākāla's body is plump and squat in its proportions. His ornaments include a garland of skulls (*kapālamālā* or *muṇḍamālā*), skulls and a serpent on his headdress, and snake armlets and bracelets. His hair is flaming and he has a beard, bulging eyes, and a furrowed brow. His halo is the "great transcendental insight fire" (*mahājñānāgni*) rather than the aura of light that surrounds peaceful deities (see cat. no. 26).

Two tiny females stand at Mahākāla's side and look toward him while making the gesture of respectful reverence (*añjali mudrā*). These figures are probably human devotees, not goddesses, since they are not cast as attendants or part of the deity's retinue but rather as supplicants. It is, however, unusual to find such figures above the pedestal level in Pāla sculptures. The female at the left holds a bowl, as if in offering. Two other human devotees bearing garlands appear on the pedestal, along with other offerings. The distinction between the two females above the pedestal and the two devotees below is not clear, although the pedestal figures may specifically be associated with the offering of the image while the two above may represent more generalized devotees of Mahākāla.

Flying near Mahākāla's head are two *vidyādhara*s, who, like the two human devotees below the god, carry

garlands. At the top center of the stele is a rendering of a gem (*ratna*) motif, which is unusual in its location as a finial of an image.

Dr. B. N. Mukherjee identifies the inscription as being in incorrect Sanskrit and in the proto-Bengali or Gauḍī script of the very late twelfth or early thirteenth century. He provided the following transliteration and translation:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Deyadharmmoyaḥ* (should be *deyadharmmoyam*) *dānapati*

2. *Mūmnala-jada Vishavaḥ* (should be *Vishavasya*)  
This is the religious gift (of) *Dānapati* (Gift Lord)

*Vishava*, the son (*jāda*) of *Mūmnala*.

Dr. Mukherjee notes that the word *jāda*, which is related to *zād*, meaning “a son,” is of Persian origin and suggests that the use of this word in the inscription might be related to the Muslim conquest of the region in the early thirteenth century.

Dr. S. P. Tewari identifies the language of the inscription as Sanskrit and the script as Nāgarī-Gauḍīya of about the twelfth century. His transliteration and translation are as follows:<sup>2</sup>

1. *Dēya dharmmōyam Dānapati*

2. [*Mahā stambha rudrābhiṣēkha*] (reading uncertain)

This is the pious gift of *Dānapati* . . .

The late Pāla period date of the image is clear from the pointed stele top and the complex and deeply carved forms of the lotus petals of Mahākāla's lotus seat. However, while the style of the image suggests a date as early as the eleventh century, paleographic analysis of the inscription by both Dr. Mukherjee and Dr. Tewari suggests a date in the twelfth century. A date more precise than eleventh or twelfth century may not be assigned at this time. Likewise, it is difficult to determine the original provenance of the image, though it relates most strongly to late Pāla carvings from Bihar rather than the Bengal region.

#### PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, “Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy,” *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 32, fig. 6.

28

#### ŚIVA BHAIRAVA

Probably India, Bihar

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 39" W: 20" D: 8"

The First National Bank of Chicago (00.571)

Bhairava (Terrible or Frightful) is an *ugra*<sup>1</sup> or “anger” aspect of Śiva and is in many ways similar to the Buddhist Mahākāla.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, at first glance it may be difficult to distinguish between Buddhist images, like the two previous examples of Mahākāla (cat. nos. 26 and 27), and this Hindu image. In each case, the central deity has the general characteristics of a fierce form, including the potbellied heaviness, flaming hair, and skull and snake ornaments. Often the figures carry similar attributes, as in these three images, where each figure holds a sword (*khaḍga*) and a staff (*khaṭvāṅga*). While in some cases it might not be possible to determine whether an image of this type is Buddhist or Hindu, the presence of Buddhist-type dedicatory inscriptions, as in the case of cat. nos. 26 and 27, may be helpful. Sometimes the presence of specific elements associated with Buddhism or Hinduism helps to identify the imagery. For example, representations of the Buddhist Mahākāla might include depictions of the Jina Buddhas, while Śiva Bhairava might have a crescent moon in this headdress.

Bhairava, one of the *saṃharāmūrti* (destructive) manifestations of Śiva, was the form the god assumed after having cut off the fifth head of the god Brahmā, the archetypical *brāhmaṇa*. In Hindu law, there is no greater sin than the killing of a *brāhmaṇa* (member of the Hindu priestly class), and therefore Śiva had to roam the earth doing penance. As he wandered, the head of Brahmā clung to his hand and would not detach itself until Śiva reached Vārāṇasī.

The *Śiva Purāṇa* claims that Bhairava is the “full” form (*pūrṇa rūpa*) of Śiva and that only those whose vision is clouded by illusion (*māyā*) will not recognize the superiority of this manifestation of the god and will refuse to worship it.<sup>3</sup> Bhairava has eight different forms, each of which is further divided into eight types, thus comprising sixty-four in all.<sup>4</sup> Of these, Stella Kramrisch has said: “There are sixty-four Bhairavas, each a specific form of dread: they are images of the threat of death and decay and also of a gluttonous capacity for consumption, like that of Time, which swallows all. Anguished, skeletal, or distended shapes of gloating fury, their images granted special favors to their worshipers. The images do not always agree, however, with the textual descriptions; there could be as many varieties of Bhairava images as there are fears and anxieties and modes of relishing and redressing them.”<sup>5</sup>

1. Personal correspondence.

2. Personal correspondence.

In this representation, the potbellied, squat-proportioned Bhairava is standing and four-armed. In addition to the sword (*khaḍga*) and *khaṭvāṅga* he holds in his back right and front left hands, respectively, he carries a shield (*kheṭaka*) in his back left hand and a bowl (*kuṇḍa*) in his forward right hand. The bowl is a standard attribute for Bhairava. Bhairava's *kuṇḍa* is made of Brahmā's skull, which became Śiva's begging bowl as it clung to his hand during the lengthy period of his wanderings. The skull-topped club (*khaṭvāṅga*) is adorned with a trident (*triśūla*), which is especially appropriate for images of Śiva.

Bhairava stands with his hip thrust to his right in an animated pose. His grinning expression seems to belie his fierce nature, but unlike benign deities, who smile without parting their lips, Bhairava's open-mouthed grin bares his teeth and contributes to his terrifying countenance. His beard, mustache, bulging eyes, and flaming hair also convey his frightening nature. His ornaments include a long, knee-length garland masterfully and tightly woven of severed human heads and arms, serpent earrings, skull and serpent ornaments in his headdress, and a necklace made of tiger claws. Although not a feature exclusive to Śiva, the third eye in the center of his forehead is especially characteristic of the god.

The pedestal is divided into five sections, a central projecting bay and two sections on either side, in the *pañcaratha* format. The pedestal is adorned with depictions of bowls of offerings and two small human worshippers kneeling on either side of the god's lotus pedestal. Near the top of the stele, a pair of garland-bearing *vidyādhara*s flies toward Bhairava's head. A gem motif strung with sashes of cloth comprises the finial of the sculpture. Two small females holding fly whisks (*caurīs*) flank and attend the central figure. Unlike the two females who seemed to supplicate Mahākāla in cat. no. 27, these figures are clearly attendants, as indicated by the standard *caurī* attribute.

This sculpture was probably created in the eleventh century, as may be determined by the forms of the lotus petals and the relative simplicity of the image compared with twelfth-century examples. The two females flanking the central figure are in less conventionalized poses than similar figures in twelfth-century examples, reinforcing the suggestion of an eleventh-century date. The style, posture, costumes, and ornamentation of the two female attendants further suggest that the image was made in a Bihar workshop rather than one in Bengal.

#### PUBLISHED:

[Chicago, The First National Bank of Chicago], *The Art Collection of The First National Bank of Chicago* (Chicago: The First National Bank of Chicago, 1974), 245; Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Shiva* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981), 35, no. 30.

1. The terms *ghora* and *raudra* are sometimes used interchangeably with *ugra* in Hinduism. (*Ghora* is sometimes interpreted as "triumphant.") In Buddhism, the term *krodha* is used to refer to the fierce forms.
2. The Buddhist pantheon also contains a deity named Bhairava. The Hindu Bhairava sometimes occurs in Buddhist art as a prostrate figure being trampled upon by Buddhist deities, such as Cakrasaṃvara (see Appendix II) and others. The term Mahākāla is sometimes used by Hindus to refer to Śiva Bhairava as the vanquisher of time. For discussion of Śiva Bhairava, see Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 250-300.
3. T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (Madras: Law Printing House, 1914-1916; reprint, 2 vols. in 4, New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1968), reprint, vol. 2, part 1, 176.
4. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, reprint ed., vol. 2, part 1, 180.
5. Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Shiva* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981), 35.

#### 29

### BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA) ATTENDED BY AVALOKITEŚVARA AND MAITREYA

Possibly Bangladesh, northern Bengal

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 39 1/2" W: 19 1/2" D: 8"

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon (68.8.15)

Illustrated in color

Śākyamuni is seated on the Vajrāsana (adamantine seat) that is symbolized by the *vajra* in front of his crossed legs. He sits atop a double lotus pedestal that rests upon a complex pedestal. Behind him is an elaborate throne back, which had become a standard part of the Buddhist vocabulary of transcendence by the Pāla period. This example is unusual because the crossbar and uprights have been doubled. On the crossbars are two half-human, half-bird celestial musicians<sup>1</sup> and two radiant *maṇi* (gems). The musician on the viewer's left is preparing to strike cymbals, while the one on the right strums a stringed instrument. Behind the head of the Buddha is a halo, indicating the radiance (*prabhā*) emitting from the about-to-be enlightened Buddha. Ovoid in shape, the halo is ringed by a complex foliate motif that represents the thick, almost syruplike light of the five primary colors of light defined in Buddhist light theory.<sup>2</sup>

Flying on billowing clouds just above the heads of the celestial musicians are two *vidyādhara* couples, celestial beings from yet another heavenly realm. Literally "Bearers of Wisdom," they arrive to honor the newly enlightened Buddha with symbols of his victory over the forces of evil. Just near each pair, a *stūpa* is represented.

Directly above the head of the Buddha is a sprig of the *āśvattha* or *pīpal* tree, Śākyamuni's specific *bodhi* tree, the *Ficus religiosa*, as may be identified from its cordate leaves with their distinctively long drip tails. The presence of the *bodhi* leaves, along with the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* of



the central figure, clearly signify that the scene is a direct reference to both the place and time of the enlightenment

The Bodhisattvas flanking the Buddha are Avalokiteśvara to his right and Maitreya to his left. Avalokiteśvara is identified by the lotus he holds, while Maitreya is recognized by the *kuṇḍikā* (mouth-washing vase of purification) resting on the *nāgakesara* flower that he carries. Maitreya, the personification of loving kindness (*maitrī*), and Avalokiteśvara, the personification of compassion (*karuṇā*), are not mentioned in narrative accounts as having attended the Buddha during the enlightenment events.<sup>3</sup> However, as a triad, Śākyamuni, Maitreya, and Avalokiteśvara are named in meditation *sādhana*s relating to the Vajrāsana Buddha image.<sup>4</sup>

Two small devotees flank the pedestal of the image. The pedestal is of the nine *ratha* form, consisting of a central projecting bay and four additional sections on each side. A front-facing elephant occupies the center of the pedestal and is flanked by depictions of two actively posed lions.

This image may have been made in northern Bengal, perhaps in what are now West Dinajpur District in India and the adjacent area of Bangladesh formerly called Dinajpur but now part of Rajshahi District.<sup>5</sup> The deeply carved figures, foliate motifs, and other elements of the relief are characteristic of the northern Bengal style of the late Pāla period, that is, the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The smoothly polished surface of the Buddha's body contrasts with the rich ornamentation of the stele.

#### PUBLISHED:

Alice Heeramanek, *Masterpieces of Indian Sculpture from the Former Collections of Nasli M. Heeramanek* (New York: privately printed, 1979), pl. 126; Joseph M. Dye, III, "The Arts of India, Nepal and Tibet," *Apollo*, n.s., 122, no. 286 (Dec. 1985), 69, fig. 8; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 29, fig. 2.

1. Such figures are often called *kiṃnaras*. See cat. no. 34 for discussion.
2. In Buddhist light theory, white, blue, yellow, red, and green combine to make golden light.
3. For discussion of this point, see Janice Leoshko, *The Iconography of Buddhist Sculptures of the Pāla and Sena Periods from Bodhgaya* (Ph. D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1987), chap. 3.
4. See Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann, *Introduction à l'Iconographie du Tāntrisme Bouddhique*, Bibliothèque du Centre de Recherches sur l'Asie Centrale et la Haute Asie, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1975), 418.
5. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 238. Especially similar are the smooth bodies of the Buddhas with their unlined drapery, the ovoid shapes of the halos, and the details of carving.

30

#### CROWNED ŚĀKYAMUNI BUDDHA WITH FOUR BUDDHA LIFE SCENES

Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha region

Ca. late eleventh century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 41" W: 20" D: 6"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection (B65 S11)

Illustrated in color

The large, central, standing figure displaying the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*) with his right hand probably represents "the traditional image" of the Buddha rather than a specific life event. (For an uncrowned example, see cat. no. 14.) The other four Buddhas are easily identified as depictions of Buddha life events. The standing Buddha to the left of the central figure represents the descent from Trāyastriṃśa heaven and may be identified by the Buddha's *varada mudrā* and the presence of the small kneeling figure of the nun Utpalā. The standing Buddha to the right of the central figure shows the Buddha taming the wild elephant Nālāgiri, who is depicted beneath the Buddha's right hand, from which issues small lions representing the Buddhist teachings; the seated figure to the left of the central Buddha's head shows Śākyamuni as the Buddha-to-be, calling the earth goddess to witness his right to Buddhahood, as may be determined by the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* of the central figure and the small depiction of the earth goddess in front of the Buddha's lotus pedestal. The seated Buddha to the right of the central figure's head shows the offering of the monkey, as may be verified by the bowl held in the hands of the Buddha and the small figure of the monkey in front of the lotus pedestal.

As has been noted previously (cat. nos. 13 and 14), Pāla artists sometimes distinguished pre-enlightenment life events from post-enlightenment events by the garment of the main figures, with the one-shouldered manner of draping the robe usually reserved for depictions of pre-enlightenment events. This pattern is visible here, because in the pre-enlightenment Māravijaya scene the Buddha-to-be is shown with one shoulder bare, while the Buddhas in the other scenes are all shown with both shoulders covered.

In this composition, each of the five figures is crowned and adorned with torque-style necklaces and earrings, although in some configurations the central figure may be the only one so adorned (see cat. no. 15). Such variations undoubtedly reflect the individual teachings associated with the sculptures, although these cannot be determined at present. In form, the crowns are typical for Pāla period Buddha images in the presence of three triangular panels as prominent elements.

The central Buddha displays many of the auspicious marks (*lakṣaṇas*) of a Buddha, including the *ūrṇā* in the center of the forehead, the webbed fingers, and the wheel (*cakra*) inscribed on the palms of his hands. His earlobes are distended in the manner typical of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and other exalted beings in Buddhist art.

Although the central Buddha stands stiffly, frontally, and with unflexed knees, the standing Buddhas flanking him are in the accentuated thrice-bent (*tribhaṅga*) posture used almost ubiquitously for attendant figures. The bodies of the Buddhas, seen most easily in the large, central figure, are highly schematized and reflect the late Pāla period emphasis on abstraction rather than naturalism in the rendering of the human form. The torsos are in the typical cow's face (*gomukha*) configuration so popular in Pāla art, while the arms and legs are simplified into cylindrical forms barely interrupted by minimal indications of the joints. The smooth drapery reveals rather than conceals the forms of the body and is visible primarily at the hem, where the robes fall into pleated forms.

The pedestal of the image bears representations of two small females devotees at the lower left. These two figures are unusual because they bear two distinctive characteristics not usually encountered in representations of human devotees and donors: each has a simple halo behind her head, and the pair sits atop a lotus pedestal. Since both the halo and the lotus seat are invariably symbols of transcendence, it is possible that the figures are not ordinary mortals. More probably, however, the divine characteristics suggest that the individuals, perhaps the donors, conceive of themselves as having attained the certainty of being reborn in paradise, the promised benefit of meritorious works such as the offering of an image.

As a symmetrical counterpart to the two figures at the left of the pedestal, two bowls of food offerings are placed at the right. These may be identified specifically as bread or dough (*torma*) piled into a distinctive conical shape.

The Buddha figures are strikingly similar in style to a series of dated metal images found at the Buddhist monastery at Kurkihār.<sup>1</sup> These three images bear dates in the reign of King Vīgrahapāla III, that is, around the third quarter of the eleventh century or slightly later. The resemblance of the central standing image in the stone relief to the figures in the metal images is striking in the treatment of the drapery and robe; the necklaces, earrings, and crown, with its distinctive ornamentation and detailing; and the shape of the torso, hips, and legs of the figures. However, the lotus pedestal of the stone image is more ornate, suggesting a slightly later date in the eleventh century. The umbrella above the head of the central Buddha in the stone image is also striking in its similarity to a number of metal umbrellas that were discovered at

Kurkihār, further supporting ties to the southern Magadha school.

In contrast to late images from some of the Pāla subschools, such as that of northern Bengal (see cat. no. 37), in which the entire composition is richly elaborated, this carving balances plain, uncarved surfaces in the composition with highly ornamented detail. The edge of the backslab is especially richly carved.

#### PUBLISHED:

Heinz Schöbel and René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, *The Four Dimensions of Avery Brundage* (Leipzig, 1968), pl. 104; René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé and Terese Tse, *Indian and South-East Asian Stone Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1969), 72-73, no. 31; *Asian Art Museum and University Collections in the San Francisco Bay Area*, Great Centers of Art Series (Leipzig, 1977), fig. 145; Pratapaditya Pal (organizer), *Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian Art* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1984), 58, no. 6; Pratapaditya Pal, ed., *American Collectors of Asian Art* (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1986), 48, fig. 16; Terese Tse Bartholomew, "Taming of the Elephant and Other Pāla Sculptures in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco," in Debala Mitra and Gouriswar Bhattacharya, eds., *Nalinikānta Śatavāṛṣikī, Dr. N. K. Bhattasali Centenary Volume (1888-1988), Studies in Art and Archaeology of Bihar and Bengal*, Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series no. 83 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989), 62, fig. 4.

1. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 69-71.

31  
CROWNED BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI  
TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA) WITH  
SEVEN BUDDHA LIFE SCENES

Probably India, Bihar, possibly southern Magadha  
Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period  
Grey black phyllite (scientifically tested)  
H: 29 3/4" W: 15 1/4" D: 5 3/8"  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Helen and Alice Colburn  
Fund (24.153)

The central figure shows the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni calling the earth goddess to witness his right to attain enlightenment, thereby defeating Māra and his forces. Identifying elements include the branches of the *bodhi* tree above Śākyamuni's head, the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) of his right hand, and the presence of the earth goddess in the center of the pedestal. A seated male figure to the right of the earth goddess may be the defeated Māra himself.<sup>1</sup>

Surrounding the central figure are seven additional events in the life of Śākyamuni Buddha. From the bottom left and clockwise around the stele, these are the birth, the descent from Trāyastriṃśa heaven, the great miracle at Śrāvastī, the death (*parinirvāṇa*), the first teaching, the taming of the elephant Nālāgiri, and the gift of honey by the monkey. Distinguishing elements in these episodes, aside from the characteristic hand gestures and poses, include the seated heretic in front of the lotus pedestal in the Śrāvastī scene, the two deer flanking the wheel in the first teaching, the lions emerging from the Buddha's right hand in the Nālāgiri scene, and the bowl in the lap of the Buddha in the gift of honey scene. The monkey depicted at the far right of the pedestal also belongs with the gift of honey scene directly above it.

In addition to the figures already identified, the pedestal, which is divided into a seven-*ratha* (*saptaratha*) format, bears representations of two lions and a small, kneeling male devotee. At the far left are two bowls of dough offerings (*torma*), which are recognizable by their distinctive conical shapes.

The treatment of the throne back is unusual in both its shape and decoration. In contrast to the common configuration, in which the throne back rises to about the level of the shoulders of the central figure and a halo surrounds the head, this throne is treated as a form that outlines both the body and head of the main figure. Further, the throne's decoration, created through incised line rather than three-dimensional carving, contrasts strongly with the other elements of the stele, which are deeply carved. The effect of this configuration is that it both emphasizes the central figure and separates him from the surrounding life scenes. This departs from a more common pattern in which the central figure seems to share the same spatial

world as the figures surrounding him. For example, see cat. nos. 15 and 30, wherein the standing Buddhas flanking the central figure seem to occupy the same space.

Although the central figure is crowned and bejewelled, the Buddhas in the surrounding life scenes are unadorned. The form of the crown, with its distinctive tripartite configuration, is a variation of the one seen commonly on Buddhas in Pāla art. The exaggerated treatment of the lower rim of the crown contrasts with the form seen in the previous example (cat. no. 30). The rosettes at the sides of the crown are standard iconographic elements in Pāla imagery, but are more prominent here than in other depictions (compare with cat. no. 30).

The central figure's broad shoulders, narrow waist, and tubular arms reflect the late Pāla style of about the twelfth century. The facial features are deeply undercut and curvaceous, as may be seen particularly in the shapes of the eyes and mouth. The rather flattened forms of the face and body of the central figure suggest that the image may have been a product of a southern Magadhan workshop.

PUBLISHED:

*Bulletin, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 22, no. 132 (Aug. 1924), 30; Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), 34, 68, 86.

1. For discussion of similar figures as representations of Māra, see Janice Leoshko, *The Iconography of Buddhist Sculptures of the Pāla and Sena Periods from Bodhgayā* (Ph. D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1987), chap. 3.

32  
PĀRVATĪ

Found in India in Bihar, Monghyr District, at Jaynagar/  
Hasanpur (near Lakhisarai)  
Ca. late eleventh century, Pāla period  
Grey black stone  
H: 45" W: 21" D: 7 7/8"  
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery  
Brundage Collection (B67 S2)

Pārvatī, the consort of the Hindu god Śiva, is identified by her lion vehicle seated beneath her and by the presence of her two children: Kārttikeya, who sits on her lap, and Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed god who sits beside her pendant foot. According to Hindu literature, Kārttikeya is the son of Pārvatī's husband Śiva, while Gaṇeśa is generally considered to have been created by Pārvatī alone. However,

by the Pāla period, Hindu convention overlooked these anomalies of parentage and Śiva, Pārvatī, and the two children were united into a family group.

The goddess is in a four-armed form, seated in the *lalitāsana* pose, that is, with one leg folded up and the other hanging down. Her two right arms are broken, but her back left hand holds a mirror and the forward left hand encircles the fragmentary figure of the child Kārttikeya. The mirror (*darpaṇa*) is an object typically belonging to women and therefore often carried by goddesses. Rather than being a symbol of vanity, as has been suggested by scholars with a Western frame of reference, the mirror is an object that symbolizes one of the basic principles of both Hinduism and Buddhism, that is, skepticism about the validity and "truth" of the material world. For while a mirror reflects the material world, the material world is not the real world; a mirror's reflection is therefore an illusion of an illusion. Yet the mirror is also an instrument for seeing and knowing, and may be a useful tool by which the universe and its truths may be understood. (See cat. no. 18 for further discussion of the mirror.)

Two small females in accentuated thrice-bent (*tribhaṅga*) postures and carrying fly whisks (*caurīs*) accompany Pārvatī. These figures are shown in a dramatically reduced scale, even more exaggerated than the usual hierarchical scaling found in Indic religious imagery, perhaps arising from the need to make them smaller than the child Kārttikeya, who ranks above them as a full Hindu god.

An unusual feature of this composition is the presence of the two elephants on lotuses appearing at the top, with their trunks wrapped around what appear to be water vessels. Typically, a pair of elephants in this position appears above images of the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī (Śrī), and are shown lustrating her with water. Such images, known as Gāḍa-Lakṣmī, are found among the earliest sculptural remains from the historic period in India and express the theme of well-being and good fortune. It is unusual to find an image of Pārvatī that incorporates this particular convention.

The beautifully carved, richly elaborated lotus pedestals, particularly that upon which Pārvatī sits, are similar to lotus pedestals in dated images of the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup> The image was found at Jaynagar/Hasanpur in Monghyr District, Bihar.<sup>2</sup> Significantly, the piece shares a number of unusual features with another image from Jaynagar, which also represents a form of Pārvatī.<sup>3</sup> Although this second sculpture is dated by inscription to the thirty-fifth year of King Palapāla (reigned ca. 1180-1214) and therefore was created more than a century later, it is similar to the present piece in the way that the artist contrasts heavily ornamented sections of the composition with starkly plain portions. It is also notable that the inscription on the dated piece calls the goddess Pūrṇeśvarī

(or Puṇyeśvarī) and explains that it was installed at the city of Cāmpā.<sup>4</sup> Since the goddess in the dated sculpture also shows Pārvatī in a configuration very similar to that of the present image, including the posture and four arms of the goddess and the presence of her two children, it might be speculated that there was a cult dedicated to a form of Pārvatī at the site in which she was known by the name given in the inscription. The city of Cāmpā mentioned in the inscription is well known as the illustrious capital of the ancient Aṅga region, corresponding to portions of modern Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts. That the image was discovered in Monghyr District is, therefore, hardly coincidental.

PUBLISHED:

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, *A Decade of Collecting* (San Francisco, 1976), pl. 210; Terese Tse Bartholomew, "The Arts of India and Lamaist Countries," *Oriental Art* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1976), 391; Terese Tse Bartholomew, "Images of Gaṇeśa," *Apollo* (Aug. 1980), 90, fig. 6; Terese Tse Bartholomew, *Ganesha, The Elephant-Headed God* (San Francisco, 1986), cat. no. 7.

1. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 73 and 74.
2. This information was communicated to Terese Tse Bartholomew, Curator of Indian Art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, by Dr. Claudine Bautze-Picron, who was able to identify the piece in a photograph believed to have been taken by Joseph Beglar in the winter of 1872-1873.
3. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 80.
4. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 240.

33

### KHASARPAṆA LOKEŚVARA

Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha, Nālandā  
Ca. late eleventh or early twelfth century, Pāla period  
Dark grey phyllite (scientifically tested)

H: 54 3/4" W: 28 1/2" D: 13"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.39)

Shown in Dayton and Baltimore

This impressive sculpture typifies the late Pāla period style in its richly carved surfaces, the accentuated posture of the main figure, the pointed stele top, and the elaboration of many features, such as the petals of the lotus pedestal. Crowded with elements that delineate the iconography of the main figure of Khasarpaṇa Lokeśvara, the image contrasts with the simpler compositions of the early Pāla period, in which only a few selected elements are included and details such as the lotus pedestal are far less complex.

Khasarpaṇa Lokeśvara was a very popular form of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. In this image, Khasarpaṇa conforms precisely to his description in Buddhist textual



sources.<sup>1</sup> He sits in his typical posture of relaxation, the *lalitāsana* pose,<sup>2</sup> in which one leg is bent and rests upon his lotus pedestal while the other hangs down but is supported by a small lotus footstool (*karnikā pādapīṭha*). He has one head and two arms. His right hand displays the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*) and his left hand holds the stem of his characteristic lotus flower.

Khasarpaṇa is described in texts as "twice eight years" of age and is not only youthful, but beautiful, peaceful, and smiling. Adorned with ornaments and auspicious marks, he wears his hair in the *jaṭāmukūṭa* (crown of matted hair). In this example, the Bodhisattva wears a lower garment that clings to his body and is marked by striated folds, a sash that goes across his torso and left shoulder, anklets, girdle, necklaces, armbands and bracelets, earrings, a diadem, and a sacred thread. The curls of his hair appear below the lower edge of his headdress and ribbons fly out at the sides.

Khasarpaṇa is virtually identical to the Lokanātha form of Avalokiteśvara in posture, gestures, and attributes. However, while Lokanātha is attended by only two companions, the goddess Tārā and the male Hayagrīva (Horse-Neck), Khasarpaṇa is attended by four subsidiary figures. In addition to Tārā and Hayagrīva, Khasarpaṇa is attended by Bhṛkuṭī and Sudhanakumāra (Very Rich Prince). In this example, Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī appear at the Bodhisattva's sides, while Sudhanakumāra sits to the left of his pendant foot and Hayagrīva sits to the right. Tārā, who stands to Khasarpaṇa's proper right, appears as Śyāma Tārā and is two-armed, making the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*) with her right hand while holding the stem of a blue lotus (*nīlotpala*) in her left hand. Bhṛkuṭī stands to the proper left of the Bodhisattva and is four-armed; her two front hands make the gesture of devotion (*añjali mudrā*), her second left hand holds a water pot, and her second right hand is raised near her head. The two goddesses are also distinguished by their individualized hair styles.

The central ornament in Khasarpaṇa's headdress is a representation of the Jina Buddha Amitābha. Called a *bimba* (literally, "image"), the Buddha appears as the progenitor of the family (*kula*) to which the Bodhisattva belongs. A frequent ornament in the headdress of Avalokiteśvara in his many forms, the Amitābha *bimba* is almost invariably recognizable by the Buddha's characteristic *dhyāna mudrā*, in which the hands rest in the lap.

In addition to the Amitābha *bimba*, the sculpture contains depictions of the five Jina Buddhas encircling the head of the central figure. Clockwise from the lower left, the Jinas may be identified by their characteristic *mudrās* as Vairocana (*dharmacakra mudrā*), Ratnasambhava (*varada mudrā*), Amitābha (*dhyāna mudrā*), Akṣobhya (*bhūmiśparśa mudrā*), and Amoghasiddhi (*abhaya*

*mudrā*).

At the far left of the pedestal is the small, animal-headed, skeletal but swollen-bellied figure of the *preta* Sūcīmukha. The term *preta* literally means "deceased" and is related to the terms *pra-yāta* and *pra-ita*, in which the prefix *pra-* (toward) suggests forward motion, specifically, further (spiritual) development by means of transition into death.<sup>3</sup> In Buddhist cosmology, transmigratory existence in the mundane world (*samsāra*) includes six realms of possible rebirth (the so-called six *gatis*, or "goings"), one of which is called *pretaloka*, the world of the *pretas*.<sup>4</sup> As beings who have been lustful and greedy in former lives, *pretas* such as Sūcīmukha are doomed to suffer insatiable hunger that is exacerbated by their tiny mouths and narrow necks, which make them unable to eat even the disgusting and fiery food available in their realm. Out of compassion, they are fed by Avalokiteśvara, who allows them to suck the nectar that flows from his gift-bestowing right hand. Depictions of Sūcīmukha in representations of Avalokiteśvara are reminders to the devotee of the Bodhisattva's unending compassion for all living beings. Asymmetrical counterpart to Sūcīmukha, the small bearded devotee at the far right of the pedestal, perhaps the donor of the image, seems ready to receive the gift of the Bodhisattva's universal compassion as well, perhaps in anticipation of his own possible future in the *preta* state.

It is likely that this image, like other Pāla period stone sculptures, was originally painted with colors that corresponded to those given in textual sources: Khasarpaṇa would have been white, Tārā would have been green, Sudhanakumāra and Bhṛkuṭī both would have been gold, and Hayagrīva would have been red. The five Jinas would also have been painted their respective colors: Vairocana is white, Ratnasambhava is yellow, Amitābha is red, Akṣobhya is blue, and Amoghasiddhi is green.

The edge of the backslab is carved into the *prabhā* motif, suggesting that the entire configuration is contained within the aura of the god. The upper portion of the stele is somewhat shorter in proportion than might be expected for images of this date. Other elements in the composition include a pair of *stūpas* on the rim of the stele below the lowermost Jina Buddha on either side.

Strikingly similar to a representation of Khasarpaṇa Lokeśvara in a standing form that was found at the Buddhist monastic site of Nālandā,<sup>5</sup> it may be suggested that this image was carved at a Nālandā workshop or one nearby. A date in the late eleventh century is certain for the Nālandā piece, based on its resemblance to an image of Tārā that is dated in the second or third year of King Rāmapāla's reign (ca. 1089 or 1090).<sup>6</sup> The Tārā image was found at Tetrāwān, a site of unknown importance in the vicinity of Nālandā, and it may be suggested that the image of Tārā was also a product of a Nālandā workshop.

Many of the stylistic features seen in the Tārā image persist into the twelfth century, and therefore it may be suggested that the Khasarpaṇa sculpture was made in the late eleventh or early twelfth century.

According to Dr. B. N. Mukherjee,<sup>7</sup> the language of the inscription is very incorrect Sanskrit and the script is proto-Bengali or Gauḍī of about the twelfth century. Dr. Mukherjee conjectures that the engraver and perhaps also the author did not know Sanskrit and only may have been imitating unsuccessfully an accepted formula for recording donations. He provided the following transliteration and translation:

- Line 1: *Ye dharmmā hetuprabhavā tesām hetu*  
(should be *hetun teshām*) *Tathāgeta* (should be *Tathāgato*) *Ya(?)va(danteshām)* (should be *hyavadanteshām*) *yo niroddha* (should be *nirodha*) *aivamvadi* (should be *evamvādī*) *Mahāśramaṇaḥ*//
- Line 2: *Devadharmneyaḥ* (should be *Deyadharmmoyam*)// *paramepāsakaḥ*// *kaṁsāḍlakasa* (should be *paramopāsaka*) *Kaṁsāḍlakasya*// *yadatraya* (should be *yadatrāpūnyam*)
- Line 3: *bhavalāchachā(?)ha-dhyāya*// *mātāpitṛi* *puvyagamyamānyaḥ*// (should be *taḍbhavātvāchā*) *aryopādhyāya* *mātāpitṛi* *pūrvāṅgamam* *kṛitvā*
- Line 4: *sakana sanaḥ* *khanuttrara* *hanavāpeyatiḥ*// (should be *sakalasatvarāśeranuttarajñāna*) *vāptaya* *iti*//

- Line 1: (The Buddhist consecratory formula, for which see cat. no. 1.)
- Lines 2-4: This is the religious gift of the devout lay worshipper Kaṁsāḍlaka. Whatever is the merit here let that be for attaining the unsurpassing knowledge by the whole multitude of beings after serving zealously the religious guide, teacher, and the parents.

Dr. S. P. Tewari<sup>8</sup> identifies the script of the Sanskrit inscription as belonging to the last phase of Nāgari or proto-Gauḍiya type of the twelfth century and transliterates and translates the inscription as follows:

- Line 1: *Yē dharmmā hētu prabhavā tēṣām hētu*  
*Tathā[ga]tō hy-avada[t-tēṣām ca yō] nirōddha*  
(*dha*) *evam vādī Mā(ma)hāśramaṇaḥ*//
- Line 2: *Dēva dharmmē(ō)yam*// *paramōpaśa(sa)kaḥ*// *Kansyāṅgakasya yad-*  
*atra(pu)[nya]* . . .
- Line 3: *bhavatā(tu) cavōpadhyāya*// *mātā pitṛ*  
*puraṅgamāmānyaḥ*//

- Line 4: *sakala satvānām anutra(tta)ra*  
*jñā(jñā)na(nā)vāpēyatiḥ (vāptayē)*//
- Line 1: (The Buddhist consecratory formula, for which see cat. no. 1.)
- Lines 2-4: This is the pious gift of the great devotee Kasyaṅgaka. Whatsoever merit is here (is obtained by this gift) let that be (to the welfare of) my teacher, parents and other honorable elders and for the attainment of supreme knowledge of all the sentient beings.

#### PUBLISHED:

Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd* (New York: The Asia Society, Inc., 1970), 16-17, 31, no. 5; Mahonri Sharp Young, "Treasures of the Orient: A Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s., 92, no. 105 (Nov. 1970), 329-339, illustrated on 332 as fig. 4; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 21; The Asia Society, compiler, *Guide to the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of Asian Art* (New York: The Asia Society, [1982]), n.p.; Diane Cats and Brooke Travelstead, "Signs and Symbols in Indian Buddhist Art," *Focus on Asian Studies* (New York: The Asia Society in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies and the Committee on Teaching about Asia, n.s., 2, no. 1 (Fall 1982), 30-39, illustrated on 36 as pl. 5; Susan L. Huntington, "Pre-Pāla and Pāla Period Sculptures in the Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 374-378, illustrated on 373 as fig. 8; Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), 34, 68, 74, 84 [incorrectly identified on p. 84 as stele with life scenes of Buddha].

1. He is described in a number of sādhanas in the *Sādhnamālā*. See Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, Mainly Based on The Sādhnamālā and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Rituals* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), 128-130.
2. The pose is sometimes called *ardhaparyāṅkāśana* (half-paryāṅka pose), although textual descriptions disagree regarding whether the two poses are identical.
3. Margaret and James Stutley, *Harper's Dictionary of Hinduism, Its Mythology, Folklore, Philosophy, Literature and History* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1977), 233.
4. In order from the highest, the realms are: *devaloka* (realm of the gods), *asuraloka* (realm of the "not men" or animistic spirits), *nṛloka* (realm of humans), *tiryakloka* (realm of animals), *pretaloka* (realm of the pretas), and the *nāraka* (hells).
5. See Susan L. Huntington, "Pre-Pāla and Pāla Period Sculptures in the Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), fig. 9.
6. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 74.
7. Personal communication.
8. Personal communication.

## CELESTIAL MUSICIAN

Probably northern Bangladesh (ancient Varendra)

Ca. late eleventh or twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 15 3/8" W: 13 1/4" D: 5"

Seattle Art Museum, Margaret E. Fuller Purchase Fund  
(64.115)

The identification of this figure is controversial. Although she is human-bodied, this female musician has the legs and wings of a bird. In general, this type of half-bird, half-human creature has been identified in art historical literature as a *kiṃnara* (or, as here, in the case of a female, a *kiṃnarī*). However, textual sources invariably describe the *kiṃnara*/*ī* (literally, "what kind of man/woman?") as a composite creature that is part horse and part human.<sup>1</sup> Another type of celestial being, the *gandharva* ("fragrance"), is sometimes depicted in art and described in literature as having a body that is part human and part bird, but *gandharvas* are invariably males, not females, and thus this figure would seem not to represent a *gandharva*. The female companions to the *gandharvas* are the *apsarasas* (essences of the waters) who are not conceived as bird-human combinations and are songstresses rather than instrumental musicians.<sup>2</sup>

Regardless of her proper identification, this figure is one of the various celestial beings who serve as heavenly musicians. She holds a bell in her right hand, but the attribute held in her left hand has been lost. Such heavenly musicians are frequently enumerated among the lists of attendants and witnesses to celestial events. Since they are common in the literature of all of the ancient Indic religions, without information about the original context of this sculpture it is impossible to determine if it was part of a Buddhist, Hindu, or Jain iconographic scheme.

Depictions of celestial musicians generally occur as subsidiary elements in larger compositions that show major deities; it is highly unusual to find a complete sculpture showing just this figure. (For depictions of similar figures, see the two celestial musicians atop the crossbars of the throne back in cat. no. 37.) However, it is possible that it was part of a composition created by separate images that together formed a larger iconographic unit.

The lush treatment of the carved details of this image, seen in the hair, foliation, and lotus pedestal (*padmapīṭha*), suggests that the sculpture was created in the northern Bengal region (ancient Varendra) during the late eleventh or twelfth century.<sup>3</sup> In this idiom virtually every element of the composition, including facial features and jewelry, is created through three-dimensional modeling, in contrast to some of the other Pāla subschools

in which incised line is relied upon to suggest forms.

## PUBLISHED:

Henry Trubner, William Jay Rathbun, and Catherine A. Kaputa, *Asiatic Art in the Seattle Art Museum, A Selection and Catalogue* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1973), 96-97, no. 15.

1. The term has been related to the Greek word *kentauros*, meaning centaur. See Alain Daniélou, *Hindu Polytheism*, Bollingen Series, no. 73 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), 307.
2. In a personal communication to me, Wendy Doniger notes that there is sometimes a conflation of birdlike and horselike creatures in Indic literature, as in the *Rg Veda*. K. Krishna Murthy suggests that the term *kiṃnara*/*ī* is used to describe equine creatures in the Hindu context, but birdlike beings in the Buddhist context. See K. Krishna Murthy, *Mythical Animals in Indian Art* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1985), 13-16. However, the subject awaits fuller examination. I am grateful to Wendy Doniger for her help in clarifying the problem of the nature of the *kiṃnara*/*ī*.
3. For comparison, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 238-240.

## 35

## THE SAGE AGASTYA

Probably India, possibly eastern Bihar (Monghyr or

Bhagalpur District) or southern West Bengal

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 26" W: 14 3/4" D: 4 1/2"

Mr. and Mrs. Willard G. Clark

Illustrated in color

Perhaps unique among the artistic remains of the Pāla period is this representation of the *ṛṣi* (seer)<sup>1</sup> Agastya (Agasti), whose name means "Mover of the Mountains" or "Mover of the Unmoving." This Hindu sage is primarily associated with south India rather than the northern regions. From India, his cult also spread to Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, and also to Nepal. The existence of such a sculpture from the Pāla regions suggests contacts between eastern India and the south and may indicate a source for the Nepali type (although the mere existence of a single image of this subject from the Pāla lands is not enough evidence to indicate a strong cult during Pāla times).<sup>2</sup>

Known first in Indic culture as one of the Vedic seers and credited with the authorship of the *Rg Veda*, Agastya is also an important sage in the Purāṇas and the two great Indian epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. Eventually, his lore mingled with that of a much later Agastya associated with the south Indian region, thus accounting for his great popularity there.

As both a divine and human sage, Agastya is sometimes shown in deified form, wherein he may have more than two arms. Here, he is clearly depicted as a

human, with only two arms. His right hand is posed in the *vyākhyāna mudrā*, a gesture of teaching or discourse, and holds a string of recitation beads (*akṣamālā*). The gesture of discourse is characteristic of Agastya, for he represents the power of teaching, particularly of grammar, medicine, and other sciences. The recitation beads, a standard attribute of *ṛṣis* in Indic art, suggests their religious role. Agastya's left hand holds a water pot (*kumbha* or *kamaṇḍalu*), also a standard identifying symbol of *ṛṣis*. For Agastya, this vessel is also symbolic of his miraculous birth from a water pot and suggestive of some of his epithets, such as "Pot-Born" (Ghaṭodbhava), Pot-Son (Kalaśi-suta), Pot-Womb (Kalaśi-yoni), and Pot-Produced (Kumbhasambhava). According to Hindu texts, both Agastya and his brother Vasiṣṭha were created when the gods Mitra and Varuṇa became sexually aroused upon seeing the beautiful celestial nymph Urvaśī, whereupon they let their semen fall into a water pot. From this "union" of Varuṇa and Mitra with Urvaśī, the two brothers were born. Agastya's pointed beard and matted hair (*jaṭāmukuta*) are also well-known characteristics of *ṛṣis* in Indic art. Other specific characteristics of Agastya are his large belly (*tundilā*) and dwarfish proportions. When shown in seated form, Agastya often wears a meditation band (*yogapaṭṭa*) around his hips and knees; here, the band encircles his legs at the knees. The two female attendants holding fly-whisks (*caurīs*) and the two seated male figures on the pedestal are unidentified.

This image was probably created around the twelfth century, as may be suggested on the basis of the complex form of the double lotus pedestals upon which the central figure and his attendants stand, the accentuated postures of the female attendants, and the elaborate and tall headdress of Agastya himself. It may be suggested that the carving was made in the eastern portion of Bihar or perhaps southern West Bengal. In contrast to twelfth-century images from northern Bengal, which are far more elaborate and deeply carved, this sculpture is characterized by smooth surfaces balanced by delicately detailed sections. An unusual feature of this sculpture is the lack of the common Pāla-style backslab. Here the central figure is carved virtually in the round, although slablike forms appear behind the two female attendants. The back of the figure of Agastya is fully carved, although the back of the two attendants and pedestal of the image are uncarved.

The function of this image of Agastya in relation to a Pāla period temple or shrine is unknown since, like most other Pāla period images, its original context has been lost. Agastya is sometimes listed as one of the "retinue deities" (*parivāradavatā*) adorning temples dedicated to the god Subrahmaṇya, but he could also be included in iconographic programs pertaining to the Hindu epics or other literary works in which the character Agastya occurs.

PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington, "A Pāla-Period Image of Agastya" in Debala Mitra and Gouriswar Bhattacharya, eds., *Nalinikānta Śatavāṛṣikī, Dr. N. K. Bhattasali Centenary Volume (1888-1988), Studies in Art and Archaeology of Bihar and Bengal*, Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series no. 83 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1989): 239-242; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 32, fig. 7.

1. For a study of *ṛṣis* in Indic art and literature, see C. Sivaramamurti, *Rishis in Indian Art and Literature* (New Delhi: Kanak Publishers, 1981).
2. Whether his presence in the Pāla territories implies influence from south India or not is unclear. Contacts between the south and the Pāla lands are well documented. For example, the great Tamil king Rājendra Cōla came to Bengal in the eleventh century during his "conquest" of the Ganges, and a number of inscriptions on images that have been found at Kurkihar in Bihar reveal that their donors were residents of Kāñcīpuram in the south.

36

## VIṢṆU TRIVIKRAMA WITH LAKṢMĪ AND SARASVATĪ

Probably Bangladesh, Dhaka District (ancient Vaṅga)

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 40 1/2" W: 20 1/2" D: 6"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection (B60 S48+)

The most popular deity in the Hindu pantheon of the late Pāla period is Viṣṇu, who is most commonly shown in his Trivikrama form. This representation of Viṣṇu Trivikrama includes the standard characteristics of such images. The god stands in an unflexed, frontal posture. His four arms display the characteristic attributes of the Trivikrama form: the mace (*gadā*) in the upper right hand, the lotus (*padma*) behind his right hand, the wheel (*cakra*) in the upper left hand, and the conch (*śaṅkha*) in the lower left. As is typical, Viṣṇu is adorned with kingly ornaments, including jewelry and a crown, as well as his characteristic *vanamālā*, a garland that reaches to his knees.

Viṣṇu is attended by his two consorts, the goddesses Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, who stand in the accentuated thrice-bent (*tribhaṅga*) posture. Lakṣmī, who stands to Viṣṇu's proper right, holds a fly-whisk (*caurī*), while Sarasvatī, who stands to the god's proper left, holds her characteristic vina, a stringed musical instrument that indicates her role as a goddess of learning and the arts. These two female companions are shown in hierarchic scale, being smaller than the central god yet larger than other figures in the composition, such as the two small male figures who flank



them. Even smaller are the two figures on the pedestal; that on the left is a kneeling devotee, while that on the right is recognized by his birdlike features as Viṣṇu's vehicle Garuḍa.

The image may be dated to the twelfth century on the basis of several features, including the pointed stele top, the detachment of the central figure from the backslab, and the execution of various elements within the composition. Although most of the elements in this composition appear on Pāla period images of earlier dates, the richness and ornamentation of these elements typify the twelfth-century style. The lions atop the elephants that form the side sections of the throne back behind the central god are heavily embellished with elaborate detailing, as are the celestial musicians perched atop the crossbars of the throne. Even the clouds surrounding the *vidyādhara*s and the *kīrttimukha* at the top are represented with the typically undulating curves of these richly carved forms.

Also indicative of this late Pāla period date is the treatment of the pedestal, which is subdivided into seven sections, making what is known as a *saptaratha* (seven-ratha) configuration. The foliate details of the pedestal also reflect the late Pāla emphasis on deeply carved, richly detailed surfaces.

While late Pāla period images from most regions of the Pāla empire display a similar tendency to fill all available space with carved elements, this image may be attributed to a workshop in the central Bengal region (ancient Vaṅga), probably one in the region of what is modern Dhaka District.<sup>1</sup> The flat, planar treatment of Viṣṇu's body is typical of this style and may be contrasted with the contemporaneous treatment found in northern Bengal imagery (compare with cat. no. 37).

#### PUBLISHED:

René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé and Terese Tse, *Indian and South-East Asian Stone Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1969), 82-83, no. 36.

1. For a comparative example, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 229.

37

#### VIṢṆU WITH LAKṢMĪ AND SARASVATĪ

Probably Bangladesh, northern Bengal region (ancient Varendra)

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 48 3/4" W: 25" D: 8"

Emily M. Goldman

Viṣṇu's upper right hand must have once held a mace (*gadā*), as seen by the remaining handle of the implement, and his upper left hand still holds a wheel (*cakra*). Thus, although the attributes of the lower two hands have been lost, it is likely that the central figure represents Viṣṇu as Trivikrama.

Although the format and elements of the image are almost identical to the Viṣṇu Trivikrama seen in cat. no. 36, the carving displays the full richness and emphasis on three-dimensionality that typifies the northern Bengal idiom of the late Pāla period. In spite of the damages to the attributes and Viṣṇu's headdress, the image is a masterpiece of the late Pāla, northern Bengal idiom. The deeply carved vegetative motifs surrounding the head of the central god are related to depictions of similar elements in artistic renderings from Nepal and Kampuchea and may have historical connections.

A number of unusual features appear in this image. While they are not unique, they indicate that the artists were embellishing every element in the composition wherever possible. These features include the flying figures flanking the *kīrttimukha* head at the top of the stele, the small female figures accompanying the *vidyādhara*s near the top, and the riders atop the elephants and lions that form part of the throne back.

Typical elements of the twelfth-century idiom include the detachment of the central figure from the stele slab and the carving of the figure almost completely in the round, the division of the pedestal into nine projecting bays (*navaratha*), the *tribhaṅga* postures of Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, the pointed stele top, and the general elaboration of all of the elements within the composition.

38

#### VAJRA TĀRĀ (AṢṬABHUJA [EIGHT-ARMED] TĀRĀ)

Possibly India, Bihar, northern Magadha, possibly Nālandā

Ca. late eleventh or twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 39" W: 21" D: 7"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection (B63 S20+)

A description of Vajra Tārā's iconography is contained in the Vajra Tārā *maṇḍala* description in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* text.<sup>1</sup> The goddess is recognized by her four heads (one is implied at the rear) and eight arms. In her right hands, she holds an adamant scepter known as a *vajra* (missing), a noose (*pāśa*), an arrow (*śara*), and a conch (*śaṅkha*). Her left hands hold a blue lotus (*nīlotpala*), bow (*dhanu*), and elephant goad (*aṅkuśa*), while the fourth (now missing) would have made a threatening gesture

(*tarjanī mudrā*). She is described as golden in color with a golden principal face, a white right face, a red left face, and a blue rear face. While color symbolism is extremely important in textual descriptions of Indic religious images, surviving images rarely show any traces of paint. However, given the fact that color and color groupings were an essential element in Indic iconography, it may be supposed that images like this were once polychromed.

Richly adorned with jewelry, including necklaces, girdle, bracelets, armlets, anklets, earrings, and a tiara, the goddess sits in lotus posture atop an elaborate double lotus pedestal. The hair on each of her heads is piled into a high *karāṇḍamukuta* (basket-shaped crown) coiffure. In the center of her foreheads, her vertical third eyes are depicted.

Surrounded by depictions of additional forms of Tārā and other figures as well, Vajra Tārā occupies the center of a three-dimensional, sculptural *maṇḍala* in which the following are depicted (see fig. 9): Akṣobhya (1);

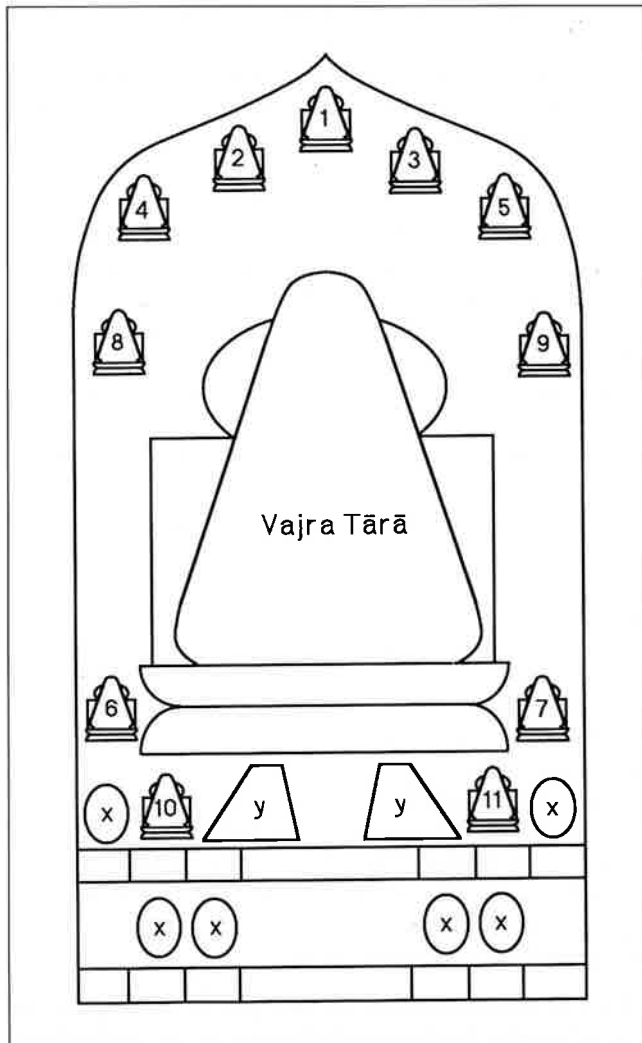


Figure 9. Diagram of cat. no. 38.

Uṣṇīṣavijayā (2); Sumbhā (3); Dhūpa (Incense) Tārā, south (4); Dīpa (Lamp) Tārā, west (5); Puṣpa (Flower) Tārā, east (6); Gandha (Fragrance) Tārā, north (7); Vajrapāśī, south (8); Vajrasphoṭī, west (9); Vajrāṅkuṣī, east (10); Vajraghaṇṭā, north (11); and a number of small devotees on the pedestal (x) and (y). In their proper groups, the figures may be divided into four Tārās additional to the central Tārā, who are conceived as located in the inner circle (4-7), four gate guardians who also encircle the central goddess but who are not in the same ring as the four Tārās (8-11), the zenith guardian (2), the nadir guardian (3), and the Buddha Akṣobhya at the top (1).

The ten goddesses (2-11) are said to have originated from the ten syllables of Vajra Tārā's *mantra*, namely, OM TĀRE TUTTĀRE TURE SVĀHA, and in turn these goddesses are said to be the embodiments of the ten perfections (*pāramitās*) of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Recitation of Vajra Tārā's *mantra* is said to bring success in any endeavor.<sup>2</sup>

The style of the image reflects the late Pāla idiom in all its richness and detail, suggesting that the carving was made in the late eleventh or twelfth century. Based on its resemblance to some of the late images from Nālandā, it may be suggested that it was a product of a northern Magadhan workshop.<sup>3</sup>

PUBLISHED:

René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé and Terese Tse, *Indian and South-East Asian Stone Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1969), 80-81, no. 35; *Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 11.

1. See Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography Mainly Based on The Sādhnamālā and Cognate Tantric Texts of Ritual* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), 240. The initial iconographic analysis for this catalogue entry based on Bhattacharyya's descriptions (pp. 240-243) was done by David T. Sanford and Terese Tse Bartholomew and was contained in the Asian Art Museum files on this image, which were generously shared with me.
2. Bhattacharyya lists a number of applications of the *mantra*. For example, "Tigers, thieves, crocodiles, lions, snakes, elephants, buffaloes, bears, bulls and the like will flee or even be destroyed, at the mere recital of the name of the goddess." Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 243.
3. For similar lotus pedestals, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 135-136.

## ŚIVA IN MEDITATION

Probably Bangladesh, central or north-central Bengal  
(ancient Vaṅga or Varendra)

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 43" W: 18" D: 7"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery  
Brundage Collection (B62 S41+)

Although this image is similar in configuration and detail to a number of sculptures from the late Pāla period that represent Śiva in his Sadāśiva form, it lacks two of the essential ingredients of Sadāśiva iconography: the usual five heads and ten arms. Here the central figure has only one head and six arms and therefore does not conform to any of the known descriptions or depictions of Sadāśiva, though it shares certain elements, particularly the posture of the legs in a meditative yogic position.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the unusual elements of this image, the presence of the bull Nandi reclining at the lower left of the pedestal leaves no doubt that the image represents Śiva and not another god. Two of Śiva's hands rest in his lap in meditative fashion; his lower proper right hand displays the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*) and holds a string of recitation beads (*mālā*), indicating his involvement in prayer and meditation, while the lower left holds a water pot (*kalaśa*) of a type that is used in initiation and purificatory ceremonies. The attributes of the two raised arms are damaged, but that on the proper right appears to have been a staff, perhaps once bearing Śiva's emblematic trident atop. As part of his meditation practices, Śiva wears a meditation band (*yogapaṭṭa*). This beltlike device, seen here encircling the god's waist and hanging down in front of his legs, is used by meditators to help support their legs in certain sitting postures. Unused by Śiva as he sits in *padmāsana* with his legs resting upon his lotus pedestal, it hangs here as a reminder of his meditative attitude. Śiva's ornaments include a crown, necklaces, armbands, and bracelets. One of his necklaces is unusual because it is ornamented with tiger claws, for the tiger claw is generally worn only by young boys in Indic culture.

Other elements of the stele include a *kīrttimukha* at the top, flying *vidyādhara*s bearing garlands and accompanied by small female companions, celestial musicians that are part-bird and part-human atop the crossbar of the throne, rampant lions atop elephants on the sides of the thrones, two female attendants flanking the central god, and two ascetics with high *jaṭāmukuta* (crown of matted locks) hair styles on the pedestal. The pedestal is divided into seven *ratha* sections (*saptaratha*).

The proportions of the sculptural scheme are unusual because the central figure is very small in relation to the whole composition. This may have resulted from

the fact that in late Pāla imagery the central figure is sometimes reduced in size in favor of greater emphasis on the elements of the backslab, as well as the fact that the central image is seated, not standing, and therefore occupies less height. On the other hand, it may be pointed out that in some late Pāla depictions of other seated figures, the artists did not choose to diminish the size of the central figure so dramatically (cat. nos. 27, 31, 32, and 38).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the reasons for this rather unusual configuration are not completely clear. The resulting effect of this diminution, however, is that the upper portion of the stele seems almost overpowering, with the trilobed halo appearing to hover above rather than surround the head of the central god.

The image falls within the parameters of the twelfth-century Pāla style in its ornately carved surfaces, the pointed stele top, and the elaborate configuration of the pedestal. An unusual feature is the treatment of the lotus petals of the *padmapīṭha* upon which Śiva sits, which consists of a complicated series of pointed and overlapping forms. Based on its relationships with images from Bogra District in northern Bengal (Varendra), as well as some from central Bengal (Vaṅga), it may be suggested that the sculpture was created in Bengal, perhaps in the central or north-central region.

## PUBLISHED:

*Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 25.

1. For depictions of Sadāśiva from the Pāla period, see Brijendra Nath Sharma, *Iconography of Sadāśiva* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1976), pls. x-xiv.
2. For a twelfth-century representation of Sadāśiva that does not have such a small central figure, see S. Huntington, The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture, fig. 77.

## 40

## SŪRYA, THE SUN GOD

India, West Bengal, "Gaṅgā Sāgarī" (Sagar Island)

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 62 3/4" W: 32 1/2"

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Given by Mrs. N. R. Norton, Mrs. Richard Waln Meirs, Mrs. Edwin N. Benson, Jr., and Mrs. William A. M. Fuller, in memory of Mrs. Jones Wister (27-9-1)  
Shown in Dayton and Baltimore

This magnificent image of the sun god Sūrya displays the full richness of late Pāla period iconographic and stylistic elaboration. In contrast to early representations of the god

(cat. no. 3), where his entourage was limited, Sūrya here appears with his many attendants and with his full iconography portrayed.

As is always the case in Pāla stelae, the figure of the central god dominates the composition. Wearing his characteristic boots and adorned like a king, Sūrya stands frontally and in an unflexed posture. His hands hold the stems of his characteristic fully opened lotus blossoms, each of which is also accompanied by several smaller buds. Sūrya's dagger is tucked into his belt on his right hip. Richly bedecked in jewelry, including girdles, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets, the god is also adorned with an exceedingly tall crown of a very unusual shape. The headband portion of the crown is bejeweled and bears open blossoms, "fans" of cloth, and streamers. The central section of the crown is round and is capped by two knobs, each of which resembles an *āmalaka* of the type that adorns the towers of northern Indian style Hindu temples. A closed bud serves as a finial to the crown.

Sūrya's torso is characterized by its broad shoulders and narrow waist; the sharp accentuation of the forms creates a triangular shape that reflects the growing abstraction seen in twelfth-century art not only in the Pāla lands but in western India and other regions of South Asia as well. Still visible in the torso, however, is the *gomukha* (cow's face) shape, which had by this time become a standard metaphor in Pāla imagery. In this example Sūrya has the bulging eyes and flaming eyebrows often seen on angry (*krodha*) deities. However, the god's smiling demeanor and the absence of other elements of a *krodha* type, as well as the thoroughly auspicious nature of Sūrya himself, preclude the identification of this image as an angry form. While the meaning of the bulging eyes is unknown, the flaming brows may simply reflect the fiery radiance of the sun god himself. The inner aura of flaming light immediately surrounding the figure further develops the notion of his radiance.

The pedestal portion of the stele is carved in the form of the sun god's celestial chariot. Aboard this heavenly vehicle are Sūrya's usual attendants, the bearded Piṅgala to his right and the youthful Daṇḍa to his left. Piṅgala carries his characteristic ink pot and pen with which he performs his duties as Sūrya's scribe, and Daṇḍa carries a sword and shield. Two of Sūrya's wives stand between the god and his two male companions, while miniature renderings of the two female archers who dispel darkness with their arrows and who accompany the entourage appear as if near the front of the skyborne chariot. Aruṇa, the sun god's charioteer, is shown prominently at the lower center of the stele and is carved with such three-dimensionality that he seems to be leading the group. Directly behind him is Uṣas, goddess of the dawn, who precedes the sun god as he rides through the sky from east to west each day. Also prominently carved in animated

poses are Sūrya's seven steeds pulling the chariot. As is usual in Sūrya images, the central horse is encircled by the chariot's wheel.

The backslab of the image is also richly carved. At the top of the pointed stele is a *kirttimukha* with two flying figures fluttering nearby. Pairs of *vidyādhara*s near the sun god's head bring garlands and play musical instruments. The sides of the stele bear representations of the planetary deities, who may be identified as follows: (Sūrya's proper left, top to bottom) Brhaspati (Jupiter), with his book and rosary; Śani (Saturn), with his bow and arrow; Maṅgala (Mars), with his spear; and Soma (Moon), holding a water pot; (Sūrya's proper right, top to bottom) Ketu, whose body ends with a serpent tail and who holds what appears to be a sword and flame; Rahu, the eclipse, who is shown as a large demon mask with hands that hold the unobscured portion of the moon; Budha (Mercury), holding a mace; and Śukra (Venus), holding a string of recitation beads and water pot.<sup>1</sup> By the twelfth century, representations of the planetary deities were fairly common in north Indian art and are seen in other representations of Sūrya from the Pāla period as well.

The edge of the stele is beautifully carved with foliate and flame motifs. Virtually every detail of the image has been fashioned with great care and fastidiousness, expressing the highest technical achievements of the Pāla idiom. The three-dimensionally carved, animated figures add great liveliness to the image, rendering it a masterpiece of late Pāla art.

This image is said to have been found at Sagar Island in West Bengal, India, in 1893. This small island apparently once housed a number of Hindu temples, as other images also have been recovered from it.<sup>2</sup> But the workshops that might have supplied images for these temples have not been identified. The sculpture's twelfth-century date is easily ascertained because of the complexity of the image and its pointed stele top.

PUBLISHED:

*Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 20 (Oct. 1907), 68; Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 90, no. 63, pls. 24-25; J. C. Harle, "The Hedges Viṣṇu," *Investigating Indian Art*, Proceedings of a Symposium on the Development of Early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography Held at the Museum of Indian Art Berlin in May 1986 (Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst, 1987), 121-131; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 30-31.



## ŚIVA IN MEDITATION

Probably Bangladesh, central or north-central Bengal  
(ancient Vaṅga or Varendra)

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 43" W: 18" D: 7"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery  
Brundage Collection (B62 S41+)

Although this image is similar in configuration and detail to a number of sculptures from the late Pāla period that represent Śiva in his Sadāśiva form, it lacks two of the essential ingredients of Sadāśiva iconography: the usual five heads and ten arms. Here the central figure has only one head and six arms and therefore does not conform to any of the known descriptions or depictions of Sadāśiva, though it shares certain elements, particularly the posture of the legs in a meditative yogic position.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the unusual elements of this image, the presence of the bull Nandi reclining at the lower left of the pedestal leaves no doubt that the image represents Śiva and not another god. Two of Śiva's hands rest in his lap in meditative fashion; his lower proper right hand displays the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*) and holds a string of recitation beads (*mālā*), indicating his involvement in prayer and meditation, while the lower left holds a water pot (*kalaśa*) of a type that is used in initiation and purificatory ceremonies. The attributes of the two raised arms are damaged, but that on the proper right appears to have been a staff, perhaps once bearing Śiva's emblematic trident atop. As part of his meditation practices, Śiva wears a meditation band (*yogapaṭṭa*). This beltlike device, seen here encircling the god's waist and hanging down in front of his legs, is used by meditators to help support their legs in certain sitting postures. Unused by Śiva as he sits in *padmāsana* with his legs resting upon his lotus pedestal, it hangs here as a reminder of his meditative attitude. Śiva's ornaments include a crown, necklaces, armbands, and bracelets. One of his necklaces is unusual because it is ornamented with tiger claws, for the tiger claw is generally worn only by young boys in Indic culture.

Other elements of the stele include a *kīrttimukha* at the top, flying *vidyādhara*s bearing garlands and accompanied by small female companions, celestial musicians that are part-bird and part-human atop the crossbar of the throne, rampant lions atop elephants on the sides of the thrones, two female attendants flanking the central god, and two ascetics with high *jaṭāmukuṭa* (crown of matted locks) hair styles on the pedestal. The pedestal is divided into seven *ratha* sections (*saptaratha*).

The proportions of the sculptural scheme are unusual because the central figure is very small in relation to the whole composition. This may have resulted from

the fact that in late Pāla imagery the central figure is sometimes reduced in size in favor of greater emphasis on the elements of the backslab, as well as the fact that the central image is seated, not standing, and therefore occupies less height. On the other hand, it may be pointed out that in some late Pāla depictions of other seated figures, the artists did not choose to diminish the size of the central figure so dramatically (cat. nos. 27, 31, 32, and 38).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the reasons for this rather unusual configuration are not completely clear. The resulting effect of this diminution, however, is that the upper portion of the stele seems almost overpowering, with the trilobed halo appearing to hover above rather than surround the head of the central god.

The image falls within the parameters of the twelfth-century Pāla style in its ornately carved surfaces, the pointed stele top, and the elaborate configuration of the pedestal. An unusual feature is the treatment of the lotus petals of the *padmapīṭha* upon which Śiva sits, which consists of a complicated series of pointed and overlapping forms. Based on its relationships with images from Bogra District in northern Bengal (Varendra), as well as some from central Bengal (Vaṅga), it may be suggested that the sculpture was created in Bengal, perhaps in the central or north-central region.

## PUBLISHED:

*Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984, no. 25.

1. For depictions of Sadāśiva from the Pāla period, see Brijendra Nath Sharma, *Iconography of Sadāśiva* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1976), pls. x-xiv.
2. For a twelfth-century representation of Sadāśiva that does not have such a small central figure, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 77.

## 40

## SŪRYA, THE SUN GOD

India, West Bengal, "Gaṅgā Sāgarī" (Sagar Island)

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Grey black stone

H: 62 3/4" W: 32 1/2"

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Given by Mrs. N. R.

Norton, Mrs. Richard Waln Meirs, Mrs. Edwin N.

Benson, Jr., and Mrs. William A. M. Fuller, in memory

of Mrs. Jones Wister (27-9-1)

Shown in Dayton and Baltimore

This magnificent image of the sun god Sūrya displays the full richness of late Pāla period iconographic and stylistic elaboration. In contrast to early representations of the god

(cat. no. 3), where his entourage was limited, Sūrya here appears with his many attendants and with his full iconography portrayed.

As is always the case in Pāla stelae, the figure of the central god dominates the composition. Wearing his characteristic boots and adorned like a king, Sūrya stands frontally and in an unflexed posture. His hands hold the stems of his characteristic fully opened lotus blossoms, each of which is also accompanied by several smaller buds. Sūrya's dagger is tucked into his belt on his right hip. Richly bedecked in jewelry, including girdles, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets, the god is also adorned with an exceedingly tall crown of a very unusual shape. The headband portion of the crown is bejeweled and bears open blossoms, "fans" of cloth, and streamers. The central section of the crown is round and is capped by two knobs, each of which resembles an *āmalaka* of the type that adorns the towers of northern Indian style Hindu temples. A closed bud serves as a finial to the crown.

Sūrya's torso is characterized by its broad shoulders and narrow waist; the sharp accentuation of the forms creates a triangular shape that reflects the growing abstraction seen in twelfth-century art not only in the Pāla lands but in western India and other regions of South Asia as well. Still visible in the torso, however, is the *gomukha* (cow's face) shape, which had by this time become a standard metaphor in Pāla imagery. In this example Sūrya has the bulging eyes and flaming eyebrows often seen on angry (*krodha*) deities. However, the god's smiling demeanor and the absence of other elements of a *krodha* type, as well as the thoroughly auspicious nature of Sūrya himself, preclude the identification of this image as an angry form. While the meaning of the bulging eyes is unknown, the flaming brows may simply reflect the fiery radiance of the sun god himself. The inner aura of flaming light immediately surrounding the figure further develops the notion of his radiance.

The pedestal portion of the stele is carved in the form of the sun god's celestial chariot. Aboard this heavenly vehicle are Sūrya's usual attendants, the bearded Piṅgala to his right and the youthful Daṇḍa to his left. Piṅgala carries his characteristic ink pot and pen with which he performs his duties as Sūrya's scribe, and Daṇḍa carries a sword and shield. Two of Sūrya's wives stand between the god and his two male companions, while miniature renderings of the two female archers who dispel darkness with their arrows and who accompany the entourage appear as if near the front of the skyborne chariot. Aruṇa, the sun god's charioteer, is shown prominently at the lower center of the stele and is carved with such three-dimensionality that he seems to be leading the group. Directly behind him is Uṣas, goddess of the dawn, who precedes the sun god as he rides through the sky from east to west each day. Also prominently carved in animated

poses are Sūrya's seven steeds pulling the chariot. As is usual in Sūrya images, the central horse is encircled by the chariot's wheel.

The backslab of the image is also richly carved. At the top of the pointed stele is a *kīrttimukha* with two flying figures fluttering nearby. Pairs of *vidyādhara*s near the sun god's head bring garlands and play musical instruments. The sides of the stele bear representations of the planetary deities, who may be identified as follows: (Sūrya's proper left, top to bottom) Brhaspati (Jupiter), with his book and rosary; Śani (Saturn), with his bow and arrow; Maṅgala (Mars), with his spear; and Soma (Moon), holding a water pot; (Sūrya's proper right, top to bottom) Ketu, whose body ends with a serpent tail and who holds what appears to be a sword and flame; Rahu, the eclipse, who is shown as a large demon mask with hands that hold the unobscured portion of the moon; Budha (Mercury), holding a mace; and Śukra (Venus), holding a string of recitation beads and water pot.<sup>1</sup> By the twelfth century, representations of the planetary deities were fairly common in north Indian art and are seen in other representations of Sūrya from the Pāla period as well.

The edge of the stele is beautifully carved with foliate and flame motifs. Virtually every detail of the image has been fashioned with great care and fastidiousness, expressing the highest technical achievements of the Pāla idiom. The three-dimensionally carved, animated figures add great liveliness to the image, rendering it a masterpiece of late Pāla art.

This image is said to have been found at Sagar Island in West Bengal, India, in 1893. This small island apparently once housed a number of Hindu temples, as other images also have been recovered from it.<sup>2</sup> But the workshops that might have supplied images for these temples have not been identified. The sculpture's twelfth-century date is easily ascertained because of the complexity of the image and its pointed stele top.

#### PUBLISHED:

*Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 20 (Oct. 1907), 68; Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 90, no. 63, pls. 24-25; J. C. Harle, "The Hedges Viṣṇu," *Investigating Indian Art*, Proceedings of a Symposium on the Development of Early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography Held at the Museum of Indian Art Berlin in May 1986 (Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst, 1987), 121-131; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 30-31.

1. This identification follows Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 91.
2. See J. C. Harle, "The Hedges Viṣṇu," *Investigating Indian Art*, Proceedings of a Symposium on the Development of Early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography Held at the Museum of Indian Art Berlin in May 1986 (Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst, 1987), 126.

41

## MINIATURE BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Eastern India or Bangladesh (?)

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Fine-grained yellowish-beige stone (pyrophyllite?)

H: 11 1/2" W: 3 1/2" D: 3 1/2"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund (71.167)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Very little is known about Pāla period architecture, since none of the major monuments and only a handful of the minor structures have survived. But miniature buildings like this one, along with depictions of buildings found in sculptural and painted representations, enable us to establish some information about the Pāla style of architecture.

Easily identifiable as one of the variants of the north Indian architectural style of post-Gupta India, this small shrine has a tall tower rising in horizontal layers. The repeating *candraśālā* (moon-chamber) ornament is often found on such temples, as is the flattened, fluted form at the top (*āmalaka*). The crowning finial, made of wood, is probably not original to the piece but may replace a typical north Indian *kalaśa* (vase) or other element.

Since so little is known about Pāla period architecture, it is impossible to determine whether this small representation replicates a specific monument or whether it is meant as a "generic," conceptual shrine. It is not even certain whether this monument is complete as we see it or whether it was part of a larger unit. The absence of a doorway on any of the four sides suggests that this piece may have been part of a compound temple unit, with this portion being only the superstructure.<sup>1</sup> Or, since models of entire temple complexes are known,<sup>2</sup> it is possible that this shrine was part of a group of small units. A large conical hole, five and one-half inches deep, is hollowed out of the underside of the piece, and two sides have drilled holes through the level of the plinth to the central cavity. These suggest that this small model might have been attached to something, with the central cavity serving as a mortise. Alternatively, the central cavity could have held a dedication inside, as in the case of a relic chamber.

Each of the four sides of the temple bears a prominent niche containing an unusual selection of four scenes from the life of Śākyamuni Buddha. Clockwise, these are the

birth, which is easily recognized by the standing figure of Queen Māyā and the small, newborn child being held by a god at the left (fig. 10); the Buddha-to-be calling the earth



Figure 10. Detail of miniature temple showing Birth of Buddha.

goddess as witness to his triumph over Māra, identified by the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* of the main figure and the depiction of the small, kneeling earth goddess holding her characteristic water pot (illustrated); the Buddha offering his inheritance to his son Rāhula, which is recognizable by the depiction of the Buddha's wife Yaśodharā and the small son Rāhula (fig. 11); and the attack by Māra and his entourage, which is depicted with attacking figures surrounding the Buddha-to-be, who is shown in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* (fig. 12).

It is of great interest that in this example the Bodh Gayā event in the Buddha's life is divided into two moments, the actual attack by Māra's forces and the Buddha calling the earth to witness. The division of the Bodh Gayā event into two distinct episodes is perplexing in light of the prevailing pattern in Pāla art. Further, the offering of the inheritance to Rāhula is not (to my knowledge) found elsewhere in Pāla period art. The four scenes do not follow





Figure 11. Detail of miniature temple showing Buddha offering his inheritance to his son Rāhula.



Figure 12. Detail of miniature temple showing attack of Māra.

a chronological sequence; instead, the two Bodh Gayā scenes are paired and the two “domestic” scenes are paired.<sup>3</sup> The reasons behind the selection of these four scenes are unknown. The two “domestic” scenes—the Buddha’s own birth and the transmission of his legacy (the Buddhist path) to his son—suggest the notion of the continuity of existence in the realm of *saṃsāra*, from which one ultimately hopes to escape.

If this structure represents a specific Pāla period monument, it is unlikely that it depicts the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā, since, as far as we know, the four life events enumerated above did not decorate the exterior of that temple. Further, the model does not have the portico on the east that must have been a feature of the Mahābodhi Temple from an early date.

On the basis of the style of the niches in which the four scenes are displayed, including the richly ornamented pedimented arches above, the double lotuses upon which the figures are placed, the accentuated postures of the females in the birth scene, and their full-breasted figures and headdress treatment, the carving may be dated to the twelfth century. Its place of manufacture is more difficult

to assess. The waxy, beige stone out of which it is carved is similar to types of stone used in Tibetan (see cat. nos. 127–130) and Myanmari art (cat. nos. 61 and 62), but based on the style of the architecture, decoration, and figures it is unlikely that it was a product of a Pāla-dependent rather than Pāla school. However, whether it was created in Bihar or the greater Bengal area remains to be determined.

In spite of the miniature scale of the carvings, the forms are incredibly rich and detailed. Tiny Buddhas appear in the *candraśālā* openings on the various storeys of the temple superstructure, and the foliate, squatting-dwarf, and *kīrttimukha* designs that appear above the four sculptural niches are notably finely carved.

#### PUBLISHED:

“The Year in Review for 1971,” *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 59 (Jan. 1972), 26, 47; Forrest McGill, *A Miniature Buddhist Shrine in the Cleveland Museum* (M.A. thesis, University of Michigan, 1972).

1. For an example of how this unit may have fit on a lower storey, see



Wladimir Zwalf, ed., *Buddhism, Art and Faith* (London: British Museum Publications Limited for the Trustees of the British Museum, 1985), 115, no. 154.

2. There are two examples in Tibet at Narthang monastery, one made of stone and one made of wood. See Rahula Saṅkṛityāyana, "Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Mss. in Tibet," *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 23, no. 1 (1937), 2 plates between pp. 16 and 17.
3. This is observed by Forrest McGill. For a detailed discussion of the problems of the iconography of these four scenes as well as other detailed descriptions of this small carving, see Forrest McGill, *A Miniature Buddhist Shrine in the Cleveland Museum* (M.A. thesis, University of Michigan, 1972).

42

## BUDDHA

Probably India, Bihar  
Ca. sixth century, pre-Pāla period  
Copper alloy (untested)  
H: 27"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D.  
Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.8)  
Shown in Dayton and Baltimore

Exhibited and published many times, this image is a masterpiece of Indian metal sculpture. Its large size and virtually perfect condition set it apart from other examples of this approximate period and earlier.

As an example of the post-Gupta, pre-Pāla period, this image is an important missing link between the sparsely documented early metalworking tradition of India and the well-known and abundant examples of the Pāla period. In spite of the fact that metal technology is traceable to prehistoric times on the Indian subcontinent, a paucity of examples exists from periods earlier than about the seventh century. While this lack may reflect a limited popularity for metal imagery in the early periods, it more likely reflects a poor survival rate for metal works. That a technically sophisticated idiom must have existed and developed prior to the Gupta period is evidenced by an image like this one, which demonstrates a well-established artistic idiom and not a fledgling tradition.

Although this image is clearly related to dated representations of Buddhas from the late fifth century,<sup>1</sup> it probably was created slightly later, for, while tied to the Gupta idiom, its style suggests the pre-Pāla developments in Bihar and Bengal. In particular, it is striking in its resemblance to the over-life size metal image of a standing Buddha that was found at Sultāngañj, Bihar, which has been dated securely to the seventh century, though the later image shows a greater departure from the Gupta style.<sup>2</sup>

Because its style seems to anticipate slightly later works from the Bihar region, it may be suggested that this sculpture was a product of a workshop in Bihar. However, the virtually complete lack of comparative materials makes it impossible to be more precise about its place of

manufacture at this time.

In its original state, the image was probably placed into a lotus pedestal and must have had a halo and perhaps an umbrella above the head. Whether the halo would have resembled the typical early Pāla style (see cat. no. 43) or would have been similar to Gupta examples is unknown, but its features would have helped greatly in the assessment of the original place of creation of the image.

The Buddha stands with the weight of his body on his left leg, with his right leg slightly relaxed in the manner seen commonly in Gupta period images. (By Pāla times, the Buddha will more often be shown standing in an unflexed position.) His right hand is raised and displays the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*). The left hand holds what appears to be a flap of cloth from his garment, in a traditional gesture for the Buddha's left hand that appears in art since at least the second century. However, while in earlier images the flap grows out of the garment itself, here the two are disconnected, suggesting that the original meaning of the gesture had been lost over the centuries.

The figure displays many of the typical physical features of Buddhas that became standard at an early date and remained characteristic throughout the development of Buddhist art. However, the lack of specific identifying features make it impossible to determine whether this figure represents Śākyamuni or another Buddha. Typical features of a Buddha include the *uṣṇīṣa*, the distended earlobes, the webbed fingers, and the series of three lines at the neck (*trivālī*). The Buddha's hair curls into the small spiral-shaped locks that were standardized by the Gupta period and which persist in Pāla art. The Buddha's half-closed eyes suggest the contemplative mood seen so commonly in Gupta imagery. His straight nose and full lips, particularly the heavy lower lip, also typify features of the Gupta style.

The figure wears his robe in the manner that came into fashion in representations of Buddhas in the Bactro-Gandhāra region around the turn of the Christian era, that is, with both shoulders covered. Much more naturalistically rendered than Pāla period examples, the folds of the garment seem to have a logical configuration as they fall across the body. Even at the hem, where the garment breaks into a series of lines and zigzags, the folds are clearly related to the structure of the robe. In contrast, during the Pāla period the folds at the hem are emphasized primarily as a strong linear pattern rather than an element that is integrated into the overall portrayal of the robe (see cat. no. 47).

## PUBLISHED:

Karl Khandalavala, "Masterpieces of South Indian and Nepalese Bronzes in the Collection of Mr. S. K. Bhedwar of Bombay," *Mārg* 4, no. 4 (1950), 10, fig. 3 on p. 11;

Stanislaw Czuma, "A Gupta Style Bronze Buddha," *Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art* (Feb. 1970), 59, 64, fig. 10; Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd—Part 2* (New York: The Asia Society, Inc., 1975), 2 (frontispiece) and 20 (cat. no. 1); Pratapaditya Pal, *The Ideal Image: The Gupta Sculptural Tradition and its Influence* (New York: The Asia Society in association with John Weatherhill, Inc., 1978), 100, no. 50; Robert D. Mowry, "A Great Private Asian Art Collection Goes Public," *Asia* 4, no. 1 (May/June 1981), 16, illus. on p. 20; [The Asia Society], *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 9; Robert D. Mowry, "Masterworks in Asian Art," *The Lamp* (New York: Exxon Corporation) 63, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 22; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 204-205, 216-217, pl. 45E; Sherman E. Lee, "Asian Arts of the Rockefellers," *Connaissance des Arts* 25 (Feb. 1982), 55, illus. on p. 54; [The Asia Society], *Guide to the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of Asian Art* (New York: The Asia Society, [1982]), n. p.; Diane Cats and Brooke Travelstead, "Signs and Symbols in Indian Buddhist Art," *Focus on Asian Studies* (New York: The Asia Society in Conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies and the Committee on Teaching about Asia), n.s., 2, no. 1 (Fall 1982), 30; Susan L. Huntington, "Pre-Pāla and Pāla Period Sculptures in the Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 376-377, fig. 15; Robert D. Mowry, *Featured Masterpiece: Gupta Buddha* (New York: The Asia Society, 1984) no. 1, cover; Virgil H. Bird et al., *A World View of Art History: Selected Readings* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1985), 26, fig. 5; Pramod Chandra, *The Sculpture of India: 3000 B.C.-1300 A.D.* (Washington, D.C.: The National Gallery of Art, 1985), 92-93, cat. no. 34; Kenneth X. Robbins, "The Sculpture of India: A Review," *Arts of Asia* 15, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1985), 103-104, fig. 6; Robert L. Brown, "John D. Rockefeller, 3rd (1906-1978)," in *American Collectors of Asian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1986), 66-67, no. 13; Standley Chodorow, Hans W. Gatzke, and Conrad Schirokauer, *A History of the World* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1986), 202.

1. See John M. Rosenfield, "On the Dated Carvings of Sarnāth," *Artibus Asiae* 26, no. 1 (1963): 10-26.
2. See cat. no. 1, note 2, for the Sūtiāgañj image. For comparison of the two pieces, see Susan L. Huntington, "Pre-Pāla and Pāla Period Sculptures in the Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 377.

43

ŚIVA AND PĀRVATĪ, SEATED AND EMBRACING  
(UMĀ-MAHEŚVARA MŪRTI)

Probably India, Bihar, Nālandā

Ca. early to mid-ninth century, Pāla period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 8" W: 5 1/2" D: 3 1/4"

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1978  
(1978.253)

For the iconography of Umā-Maheśvara, see also cat. nos. 2, 18, and 96.

This image is so strongly related in style to numerous metal images that have been unearthed at the site of Nālandā that it may be suggested with confidence that it is a product of the Nālandā school.<sup>1</sup> Further, three of the Nālandā images in this style bear dates in the reign of King Devapāla, who ruled in the first half of the ninth century, further confirming a date of about the mid-ninth century for this image.<sup>2</sup> While every example of the style does not bear all of these features, key elements of the type include the rather bulbous treatment of the facial features; the childlike proportions of the bodies; and the distinctive treatment of the halo, which has a plain inner band, a beaded band, and finally an outer rim comprised of hooklike, evenly spaced rays. The open center of the halo is also typical of the style, as is the use of a plant motif at the top of the open center.

Unlike the usual Pāla depictions of the Umā-Maheśvara theme (cat. no. 18), in which Umā (Pārvatī) is firmly seated atop Śiva's left knee, here she is seated along the outer edge of his leg. At first glance it appears as if she is seated next to Śiva in the manner more commonly seen in Nepal (cat. no. 96).

Śiva is four-armed and, as is typical in the Umā-Maheśvara theme, he fondles Umā's breast with one of his left hands while reaching toward her chin with one of his right hands. His other left hand holds his characteristic trident (*triśūla*), while his other right hand holds what appears to be a skull cup while displaying the gift-bestowing gesture (*varada mudrā*). Umā is two-armed; her right arm encircles Śiva's shoulder and her left arm hangs down, allowing her hand to rest on her left knee.

The pedestal is rendered into cubical, crystalline rock forms meant to signify that the god and goddess are seated atop their mountain abode, Mount Kailāsa. While this feature is an important part of the iconography of Umā-Maheśvara (see cat. no. 96), it is not usually represented in metal works of the subject, but more often appears in stone renderings. The two vehicles of the deities, Śiva's bull and Pārvatī's lion, recline in front of the mountainous form.

In the front center of the pedestal is a small, seated male who, like Śiva, holds a trident in his left hand and

makes the *varada mudrā* with his right hand (the object he holds in his gift-bestowing hand is unclear). This small, bony figure may be identified as Bhṛṅgī (Wanderer), a sage (*ṛṣi*) who was completely devoted to Śiva. His faithfulness to Śiva was so great, in fact, that on one occasion he refused to worship Pārvatī as she resided with Śiva on Mount Kailāsa. Wishing to circumambulate only Śiva, Bhṛṅgī was forced to worship Pārvatī as well when Śiva took the Ardhanārī form in which the god and goddess were united into a single body. Still steadfast in his resolve to honor only Śiva, Bhṛṅgī took the form of a beetle so that he could walk around only the right half of the body, which was Śiva's, and not the left half, which was Pārvatī's. Included in an image of Umā-Maheśvara residing on Mount Kailāsa, Bhṛṅgī may be shown as the supreme devotee of Śiva and may be a specific allusion to the Ardhanārī incident.

Facing outward on the left side of the pedestal is a representation of the seated god Kārttikeya, while facing outward on the right side of the pedestal is a depiction of the seated god Gaṇeśa. According to most Hindu texts, Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa are considered to be the offspring of Śiva and Pārvatī, although there are various and conflicting accounts as to how these two children came to be born. While Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa often accompany Śiva and Pārvatī in artistic renderings, their placement at the sides of the pedestal, rather than in the front, is highly unusual. It is possible that the artist wished to convey the notion of the pedestal as Mount Kailāsa as fully as possible and thus placed the two small figures as if they are sentinels at the sides of the sacred mountain abode.

#### PUBLISHED:

Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 252, pls. 54a and 54b.

1. For two related examples from Nālandā, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 164-165. In spite of the fact that Nālandā was one of the most renowned Buddhist centers of the Pāla period, numerous Hindu images have been found at the site. Therefore, the attribution of a Hindu image like this one to the Nālandā school of sculpture is not inappropriate.
2. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 28-30.

44

#### MAÑJUŚRĪ KUMĀRA

Probably India, Bihar, Nālandā

Ca. early to mid-ninth century, Pāla period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 8 1/8" W: 4 1/2" D: 3"

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Gift of Fred and Grace Kaler in honor of Laurence Sickman (75-32/4)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Illustrated in color

Like the preceding example, this sculpture is easily attributed to the early- or mid-ninth-century Nālandā school of metal sculpture.<sup>1</sup> Elements such as the square throne back with beaded rim, the lion-atop-elephant motif at the sides of the thrones, the naturalistic lions crouching on the base of the throne, the pointed lotus petals of the lotus pedestal, and the distinctive treatment of the halo and foliate motifs atop the crossbars of the throne are all found in the well-documented imagery of Nālandā of this period. The Bodhisattva's slender and youthful appearance, his bulbous facial features, and the details of his costume and ornamentation are also comparable to these elements on other ninth-century Nālandā images.

The Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī Kumāra is recognized by the blue lotus (*nīlotpala*) blossom above his left shoulder, which he holds by the stem wrapped around his left arm, and by his characteristic tiger claw ornaments adorning his necklace. He sits on a lotus pedestal atop the seat of a throne in a posture of ease (*lalitāsana*), with the left leg tucked up on the lotus seat and the right leg hanging down. Two lions beneath his seat may represent Mañjuśrī's characteristic lion (*simha*) vehicle (*vāhana*). Although Mañjuśrī may display several hand gestures, he is shown here in a gesture of teaching (*dharma-cakra mudrā*). As the personification of transcendent wisdom, Mañjuśrī is fittingly sharing his knowledge through instruction of his devotees.

#### PUBLISHED:

*Archives of Asian Art* 30 (1976-1977), 115, fig. 33; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 258, pl. 57f; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Oriental Art* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 34, fig. 8.

1. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 28-30, for dated images from Nālandā of approximately the same period and figs. 165 and 167 for other examples in the identical style.

Probably southeastern Bangladesh (ancient Samatāṭa)

Ca. mid-ninth century, Pāla period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 7 3/8"

Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde,  
Leiden, The Netherlands (RMV 1403-2837-1883)

Although this image was found in Java, it has been correctly recognized as a product of a Pāla period workshop.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, it is likely that the piece was made in southeastern Bengal (ancient Samatāṭa),<sup>2</sup> where a flourishing school of Pāla metal sculpture had been established by the ninth century. Most famous of the Samatāṭa region sites that have yielded metal sculptures is Jhewāri in Chittagong District, where some sixty-one Buddhist sculptures and several other works were discovered in a hoard in 1927.<sup>3</sup> However, the specific place of manufacture of this Viṣṇu image is unknown.

The history of how this sculpture reached the island of Java is also not known. However, a likely scenario is not difficult to imagine in light of the extensive trade and international contacts between the Pāla lands and the Indonesian region. Possibly brought to Java at an early date, such an image is likely to have served as a model for Javanese artists who were looking to the Pāla style for artistic and iconographic inspiration. Contact between Nālandā and Java is documented by inscriptional evidence, but southeastern Bengal must also have been an area crucial to the dispersal of the Pāla style to Southeast Asia, considering its geographic location and the artistic similarities between the art of Samatāṭa and Java.

Viṣṇu stands in a frontal and unflexed posture atop a lotus pedestal that in turn rests on a plain, rectangular base. Although the god originally had four arms, the two front arms have been broken off. His remaining right hand rests atop his discus (*cakra*), and his remaining left hand rests atop his mace (*gadā*). The two attributes are supported in a highly unusual manner, for each is held aloft by a lotus blossom that grows out of a stem that rises from the pedestal.

While the Samatāṭa metal images share a number of features with contemporary pieces from other Pāla workshops, such as Nālandā, they are also notable for their many distinctive characteristics. These suggest that, while the various schools of Pāla sculpture may have been in artistic contact, each had a unique history. In this sculpture, the configuration of the architectural construct behind Viṣṇu relates to numerous examples from southeastern Bangladesh.<sup>4</sup> Also, the zigzag design in the uprights and crossbar is a motif found in other examples from the region.<sup>5</sup> The solid halo is interesting in light of the fact that many metal images of Javanese manufacture have

this feature.

Based on comparison with securely dated metal images from the Pāla regions, a date of mid-ninth century may be suggested for the piece. Although the strutlike elements of the architectural construct are seen in eighth-century metal images, it is likely that the piece was made slightly later, based on the very solid appearance of the central figure and his resemblance to ninth-century images from Jhewāri and other sites.

#### PUBLISHED:

H. H. Juynboll, *Catalogus van 's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum*, vol. 5, *Javaansche Oudheden* (Leiden, 1909), 63; August Johan Bernet Kempers, *The Bronzes of Nalanda and Hindu-Javanese Art* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1933), 61, pl. 33; P. L. F. van Dongen, Matthi Forrer, and Willem R. van Gulik, eds., *Masterpieces from the National Museum of Ethnology* (Leiden, 1987), no. 52; Pauline Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A.D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 66, no. 14.

1. A. J. Bernet Kempers knew the piece had been found in Java but did not recognize that it was not a product of an Indonesian workshop. See August Johan Bernet Kempers, *The Bronzes of Nalanda and Hindu-Javanese Art* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1933), 61. For notation that the piece was found in Java but recognition that it was of Pāla manufacture, see Pauline Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A.D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 27.
2. As suggested by Scheurleer and Klokke, *Divine Bronze*, 66.
3. See Dinesh Chandra Sircar, "Indological Note—Inscriptions of the Bronze Images from Jhewari in the Indian Museum," *Journal of Ancient Indian History* 10 (1976-1977): 110-114.
4. For related, but not identical, images, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 256 and 261.
5. For examples, see Susan L. Huntington, ed., *Archive of Bihar and Bengal Art* (Leiden: Inter Documentation Company, forthcoming), section on Jhewāri.

#### 46

#### VIṢṆU WITH CONSORTS

Probably southeastern Bangladesh (ancient Samatāṭa)

Ca. late ninth or early tenth century, Pāla period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 10" W: 7" D: 2 5/8"

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Kate S. Buckingham Fund (1985.222)

Illustrated in color

Viṣṇu stands in the center of the composition flanked by his two consorts. Unlike the usual Pāla depictions in



which the female figures would be expected to be much smaller in scale than the central male god, this sculpture is striking in the similarity of size among the three figures. The goddess to the proper right of Viṣṇu may be identified as Lakṣmī by the open lotus she holds in her left hand, while the other goddess may be Sarasvatī, who is usually paired with Lakṣmī as Viṣṇu's second consort in Pāla imagery. However, because her attribute is damaged, her identification cannot be confirmed.

The facial features of all three figures are virtually identical, providing a very clear example of one aspect of stylistic idioms in the Pāla lands and throughout much of India, that is, specific facial types came to be characteristic of certain schools of art and all or most figures depicted in the art display these characteristics. Thus, the faces on images from Nālandā, Jhewāri, and other well-established schools are often distinctive, providing an important key to the recognition of the various idioms.

All three figures stand atop lotus pedestals that are placed on a simple rectangular base. The figures share a single, rounded aura in a configuration seen in a number of metal images from southeastern Bangladesh (ancient Samatāṭa). Viṣṇu's head is encircled by a simple incised halo as well. The effect of the solid, enclosing background suggests the backslab treatment of Pāla stone sculptures rather than ties to metal images of other Pāla schools.

In the front center of the pedestal, Viṣṇu's vehicle (*vāhana*), the bird-man Garuḍa, is portrayed. Like the two goddesses, Garuḍa is larger than usual in this representation, providing the artist with a special opportunity to show Garuḍa's birdlike features, including his beak, feet, and wings. Shown in his typical posture of devotion, Garuḍa's hands are pressed palms together in the gesture of reverence (*añjali mudrā*).

The prominence accorded the three main figures and Garuḍa by their sizes is further emphasized because each is modeled virtually in the round. The overall simplicity of the piece, including the solid, simple halo and pedestal, further offsets the figures. Such simplicity occurs in a number of images from Samatāṭa, suggesting that a distinctive aesthetic that contrasted with the more ornate styles developing elsewhere in the Pāla kingdom had developed in the southeastern region.

While the central portion of the solid halo is plain, the edge is decorated with a zigzag motif and a beaded, flamelike rim. The zigzag appears on other images from Samatāṭa (cat. no. 45) and is distinctive to the art of this region. The ornament at the top center of the halo may represent a flower or gem motif.

Like the Viṣṇu in the previous image (cat. no. 45), which is a slightly earlier example from the same regional school, this figure stands frontally and unflexed. In both cases the god's two lowered hands are in an identical position and hold identical attributes, that is, the wheel

(*cakra*) and mace (*gadā*), held aloft by supports rising from the pedestal. Since this lowered position for the hands and the display of attributes as if they are supported from below is quite unusual in the Pāla artistic repertoire, these features may reflect a local convention. Although one of the forward arms is damaged in this piece, it appears that the two remaining arms are positioned like those in the previous example, further underscoring the regional ties. The attribute held in Viṣṇu's front right hand is unusual because of its small size and may reflect another local preference.

The three figures wear similar lower garments that cling to their bodies and are emphasized by a series of parallel incised lines. Each divinity is adorned with necklaces, girdles, armlets, earrings, and elaborate hair styles and headdresses. In particular, the central element in Viṣṇu's crown is notable for its unusual shape.

The date of the image may be suggested on the basis of the paleography of the inscription, as well as the style of the figures. The simple and pointed lotus petals, having an almost heart-shaped form, are characteristic of forms seen in metal images of the ninth century throughout the Pāla lands but that also persisted into the early tenth century.

The inscription on the pedestal has been read by both Dr. B. N. Mukherjee and Dr. S. P. Tewari, who agree that it records the donation or creation of the image by a devotee of Viṣṇu, although the two scholars do not concur on the name of the devotee.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mukherjee identifies the language of the inscription as incorrect Sanskrit and assigns the script to the Siddhamātrkā type of the ninth or very early tenth century; Dr. Tewari identifies the language as Sanskrit and the script as early Nāgari of the tenth century. Dr. Mukherjee transliterates and translates the inscription as follows: *Viṣṇubhakṭaḥ bhaṭṭa śrī Inṛitasya*; "Of the learned brahmin, illustrious Inṛita, the devotee of Viṣṇu." Dr. S. P. Tewari reads the inscription as follows: *Viṣṇu[bha]kṭaḥ Bhaṭṭa Gōinda tasya*; "It is (i.e., this image, is either the work or the donation) of Bhaṭṭa Gōinda devotee of Viṣṇu." Dr. Tewari suggests that the name Gōinda may be the contracted form of the name Govinda, which is a synonym for Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa.

Stylistic relationships between this image and metal images found in Java offer clear evidence that the artistic ateliers of ancient Samatāṭa played an important role in the dispersal of the Pāla style to Southeast Asia.

#### PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 34, fig. 9.

1. Translations and comments were provided by correspondence.

## BUDDHA

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. eleventh century, Pāla period

Bronze (scientifically tested) with traces of gold and silver inlay

H: 19 1/4" W: 5 3/4" D: 5 1/4"

Collection of Dr. David Nalin

This standing Buddha was probably once surrounded by a halo, as suggested by the presence of a tenon on the back. It is likely that the halo would have been fairly ornate, based on analysis of typical examples of about the eleventh century, when this image was probably made. Thus, the quiet simplicity of this piece may belie the possible complexity of the original configuration.

The Buddha stands with the weight of his body resting evenly on both legs. His body reflects the simplified, abstract forms that had become standard by the late Pāla period, in which the surfaces of the torso and limbs are not recorded in detail. Instead, the artist emphasizes the elements of the body as smooth, perfectly formed components. Although the surface of the image is somewhat eroded, it is likely that the body's smoothness was not interrupted by drapery lines. Instead, recalling the Gupta-dependent forms of the early Pāla period (cat. no. 1), the drapery clings tightly and invisibly to the Buddha's body except at the hem, where the robe breaks into a series of prominent and rhythmical folds. While similar in emphasis to the treatment of the hem in earlier images (cat. no. 42), the folds are more stylized and give the impression of serving as an ornamental design rather than as a reflection of the structure of the garment. Variations on such folds will be seen in Pāla-dependent and Pāla-related artistic traditions elsewhere in Asia.<sup>1</sup>

The Buddha's right hand is raised palm outward in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*), while his left holds the end of his robe in a convention that is nearly a millennium old by this time. His face is smiling. Characteristic of Buddha figures, he has distended earlobes and an *uṣṇīṣa* topped with a gem. The image once had an *ūrṇā* inset into the forehead, perhaps made of a gemstone.

While this sculpture was probably made in the eleventh century, it is difficult to determine its precise place of manufacture. The facial features and some aspects of the shape of the body and its proportions relate to works produced in Bihar, but the stylized treatment of the hem of the garment relates to examples found in Bengal. The double lotus pedestal, with its pointed, upturned petals and double-outlined, downturned petals, is a type found throughout the Pāla lands in both Bihar and Bengal during the eleventh century.

## PUBLISHED:

Jane Anne Casey, ed., *Medieval Sculpture from Eastern India: Selections from the Nalin Collection* (Livingston, New Jersey: Nalini International Publications, 1985), 63, no. 34.

1. While not identical, the treatment of the hem is similar in conception to a type seen on south Indian Buddhist images of about this date. See Wladimir Zwalf, ed., *Buddhism: Art and Faith* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum and the British Library Board, 1985), 147, no. 206.

## 48

## VIṢṆU WITH LAKṢMĪ AND SARASVATĪ

Probably Bangladesh

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 7 5/16" W: 3 1/2" D: 2 7/16"

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Nelson Fund) (63-3)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Judging from the number of surviving images, Viṣṇu was the most popular Hindu god in the eastern Gangetic region by the late Pāla period. This image is a typical twelfth-century metal depiction of Viṣṇu and his consorts—Lakṣmī, who stands to his proper right and holds her characteristic lotus flower, and Sarasvatī, who stands to his left and holds her identifying musical instrument, a vina. The god stands frontally and unflexed and is considerably larger in scale than his female companions in what had become a standardized system of hierarchically determined proportions. Each figure stands atop a double lotus pedestal that rests on the base of the image. In contrast to the simple pedestals of many earlier metal images (cat. no. 46), late examples like this are often rendered into architecturally complex forms. Here, the *pañcaratha* (five-ratha) format creates a central bay with two sections flanking each side, but the pedestal is further subdivided into a lowermost, open area supported on feet, and two upper registers, each of which is further subdivided into a number of horizontal tiers. Such a configuration is undoubtedly related to the treatment of the bases of architectural monuments of this period, as may be determined by comparison with typical north Indian monuments of about this date.

The halo has a rounded shape but has a *kirttimukha* finial that transforms the top into a pointed form. The inner portion of the halo has an openwork, latticelike design in the lower half, while the upper half has an inner flowered halo behind Viṣṇu's head. The flattened, curled *prabhā* motif along the outer edge of the halo is typical of twelfth-century metal imagery.

In front of the pedestal, as if kneeling before the

image itself, are representations of Garuḍa at the left and a male devotee at the right. Even smaller than the depictions of the two goddesses flanking Viṣṇu, Garuḍa and the devotee are also hierarchically scaled.

The image relates to a number of metal images that have been found in the Bengal region and that may be dated securely to the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup>

1. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 280, for an example made of silver. The treatment of the figures is not identical, but the resemblance of the present example to numerous others from the Bengal region provides strong evidence of its Bengali provenance.

49

# MAITREYA BODHISATTVA (TUṢITA MAITREYA)

Probably India, Bihar

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Copper alloy (untested) with silver and copper inlay

H: 7 1/4" W: 5 5/8" D: 3 1/4"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Illustrated in color

The Bodhisattva Maitreya, the future Buddha, may be recognized by the small *stūpa* that appears in his headdress and the flower (presumably the *nāgakesara* flower) that he holds in his left hand. Upon the flower is another of Maitreya's attributes, a vase (*kamaṇḍalu* or *kuṇḍikā*), which is considered to be a receptacle of knowledge (*jñānabhāṇḍa*). The heir-apparent to Śākyamuni Buddha, Maitreya is the embodiment of love, friendliness, and benevolence. Popular throughout the Buddhist realms, he appears in art both as a Bodhisattva, as in this example, and as a Buddha (cat. no. 72).

Maitreya is seated in *rājālīlāsana*, a posture of royal ease (literally, "king's 'playing' posture") in which both legs are bent, with one knee resting on the seat and the other raised and the feet close together. The Bodhisattva supports his body by leaning against his left arm, while his right arm is bent and rests on his right leg. The angular appearance of his posture is accentuated by the broad shoulders, narrow waist, and flattened torso. The figure is adorned with necklaces, armbands, anklets, earrings, and a tiara. His hair is piled into an elaborate, high *jaṭāmukuta* (crown of matted hair). His upper torso is bare, but he wears a lower garment that is decorated with a circle motif that may reflect a textile design current when the image was made.

Maitreya's facial features display typical features of late Pāla period images. His face is flat and broad and his eyebrows and eyes have curvaceous outlines. The upper lids are drooping and heavy and cover the upper half of the eyeball. The eyeball has a drilled center, giving the

Bodhisattva's gaze a directional look.

The Bodhisattva sits atop a highly ornate pedestal. While a few examples of such elaborate pedestals survive in the Pāla repertoire, this one is unusual in its diamond-shaped base, which contrasts with the more common rectangular, round, or rounded triangular bases seen in Pāla metal images. The lower edge of the base is decorated with a bead motif that is common in Pāla metal images and is characterized by fully rounded beads. In contrast, emulations of the Pāla style produced elsewhere in Asia, particularly in Tibet, often render the beaded edge simply by using slashes to demarcate the beads. Above the beaded edge is a geometric band, followed by a row of lotus petals, above which is a foliate scroll motif. The double lotus pedestal that serves as the Bodhisattva's seat is above the scroll and is edged by another row of beading.

An unusual feature of this work is that the figure and the small cushion upon which he sits are detachable from the base. In turn, the base itself was created by joining at least three separate sections. The reason for keeping the figure and the pedestal separate is unknown.

This image was sculpted completely in the round, and the back is as beautifully finished as the front. The absence of a tenon on the back makes it unlikely that a halo had been attached to the piece.

This sculpture was probably the product of a twelfth-century workshop, as suggested by the style and technique of the image, as well as the paleography of its inscription. In particular, the elaborate detailing of the pedestal, the high headdress and elaborate jewelry worn by the figure, and the extensive use of copper and silver inlay are characteristic of the late phase of Pāla metal sculpture. The refined workmanship, visible in the detailing and expressiveness of the work and the precision of the metal inlay, indicates that Pāla metalworking was at an apogee during the twelfth century.

It is likely that this image was made in Bihar. However, because it resembles works found in both the ancient Magadha and Aṅga regions, it is difficult to pinpoint the place of manufacture precisely. The elaborate base, including the vinescroll motif, bears a strong resemblance to similar elements in images that were found at Fatehpur in southern Magadha,<sup>1</sup> while the lower elements in the pedestal and the figure are closely related to examples found further east in Aṅga at Pātharghātā.<sup>2</sup>

An extremely rare feature present in this image is the fact that it has been sealed across the bottom with a baseplate (fig. 13). Pāla period metal images usually have open bases, but here, a flat metal plate was fitted across the open bottom after the pedestal had been cast.

The sealed base is also notable because it bears a Sanskrit inscription. While inscriptions are commonplace on Buddhist images of the Pāla period, they are usually placed on the front face of the pedestal of an image or



Figure 13. Inscribed base of cat. no. 49.

around the halo, as may be seen from many examples in this catalogue. Dr. B. N. Mukherjee has identified the script as proto-Bengali or Gaudī of about the twelfth century and provided the following transliteration and translation: *Paṁsthasādhu Chamvivṛasya* (Of [i.e., given by] the Chamviv(r)a, the saint staying at Paṁ [or the saint belonging to {a sect called} Paṁstha?]).<sup>3</sup>

The practice of adding a baseplate as part of the dedication and vivification of an image is known primarily in the metal imagery of Tibet; indeed, it is a virtually ubiquitous feature of Tibetan metal images. However, sealed bases occur only in a handful of metal sculptures from Pāla period India, and therefore it has been difficult to determine whether there was an Indic origin for this practice.<sup>4</sup> The presence of the baseplate here suggests that the piece had been given a formal consecration that may have included the insertion of precious objects into the piece prior to the closure of the bottom. In Tibet, the contents of such dedicatory materials include written or printed religious verses (usually *mantras* or *dhāraṇīs*), coins, shells, gemstones, and other precious or symbolic items, but since the practice is so little known in India, it is difficult to know what might have constituted a typical consecration in the Indic context.

Despite the apparent similarities between the Tibetan and Pāla examples that have sealed bases, there are striking differences as well. For the most part, Tibetan baseplates are made of copper, regardless of the metal used for the image. The copper sheets are flattened by hammering and are then hammered in place, often in a fairly crude manner. Many Tibetan examples are decorated with the design of a crossed *vajra* (*viśvavajra*) created through chasing. The few Tibetan examples that have Sanskrit inscriptions on the baseplates are clearly copies of Indic prototypes (see cat. no. 134). In contrast, the baseplates of the Indian examples, like this one, are made of the same metal as the images themselves. Although these plates are flat like their Tibetan counterparts, the metal is much thicker, and the plates are cast rather than hammered metal sheets.

Further, they are inserted into the base in a much more refined manner. Finally, none of the known Indian examples has the *viśvavajra* design.

The issue of whether the practice of sealing the bases of Buddhist metal images originated in India is complicated by a number of factors. If the practice were Indian, one would expect to find it in Buddhist artistic traditions elsewhere in India, such as Orissa, Kashmir, or south India, yet apparently it is known only from these few Pāla examples. If the practice began in the Pāla regions, it is difficult to explain why only a few examples survive in such an extensive corpus of metal images. Further, if the practice was distinctively Pāla, it is puzzling that it is seen only in Tibet and not in other regions that drew on the Pāla school of art, such as Nepal, Indonesia, and Myanmar. On the other hand, if the Tibetans were the originators of the practice, and such dedications were introduced into India from Tibet, it is difficult to explain the existence of several Tibetan examples that are closely modeled on the Indian style, as in the case of the baseplate in cat. no. 134, which is inscribed in the Indian manner.

The transformation of images into sacred repositories, thereby necessitating the addition of baseplates, may represent a conflation between practices associated with *stūpa* worship (for *stūpas* are by nature containers for sacred objects) and other practices associated with the consecration of images. However, much more research needs to be done before this phenomenon can be understood, because the seemingly simple innovation of the baseplate is probably a manifestation of a complex doctrinal and ritual transformation within the Buddhist tradition.

#### PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy" *Oriental Art* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 34-35, fig. 10. (In this article, the provenance of the piece was given as India or Bangladesh; however, subsequent research has allowed the more precise attribution to the Bihar region, as presented here.)

1. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 190-191. Two hoards of metal images have been found at Fatehpur in Nawada (formerly Gaya) District in the ancient southern Magadha region of Bihar. See also Susan L. Huntington, "Some Bronzes from Fatehpur, Gaya" *Oriental Art*, n.s., 25, no. 2 (Summer 1979): 240-247; Bhagwant Sahai, "The Bronzes from Fatehpur," *Journal of the Bihar Purāvid Parishad* 1 (1977): 173-186.
2. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 196, for a piece that has similar treatment of the details of the base of the pedestal. Especially comparable are the beaded rim and geometric motif directly above in each example.
3. Dr. B. N. Mukherjee, personal correspondence.
4. Until recently, only a single example of a Pāla metal image with a sealed base plate had been identified. See Rakhil Das Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, vol. 47 (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933), pl. 66c.



The whereabouts of that piece, which was found at Gayā, is unknown, and I have not been able to examine it firsthand. In my extensive examination of Pāla metal images, including handling most of the examples from sites like Nālandā and Kurkihār and others in Indian collections, I had never come across an example having a sealed baseplate until recently. I have now seen about three Pāla pieces with baseplates.

50

## VOTIVE *STŪPA*

Eastern India, Bangladesh, or Himalayan region (?)

Ca. twelfth century

Copper alloy (untested) with inlay of semiprecious stones

H: 11 1/2" W: 5 1/4" D: 5 1/4"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund (82.132)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

This small votive *stūpa* consists of two separately produced elements, a square base and a round dome that is fitted into the base with prongs. The sides of the square base are offset so that each has a projecting central bay. Rising in several horizontal stages, each stage tapers inward so that the shape narrows as it rises toward the base of the circular portion of the *stūpa*. Foliate motifs decorating the square base contain small receptacles that once held or were intended to hold gemstones. A crouching lion looks outward from each of the four corners of the base.

The upper portion of the *stūpa* rests on a circular double lotus pedestal that in turn rests on a spiral creeper that is inhabited by animals and at least one human-type figure. The dome, which has a bulbous shape, carries the principal iconographic elements of the *stūpa*, consisting of four cusped, trefoil niches, each of which contains a representation of a seated figure. The niches are decorated with crystal and semiprecious stones. Above, the superstructure of the *stūpa* consists of a mast (*stambha*) with a series of thirteen diminishing, stylized disks. Called *bhūmis* (levels), these elements may signify thirteen stages of the Bodhisattva path toward enlightenment. Simultaneously, these disks represent umbrellas (*chattras*) signifying honor and protection in a symbolism already present in the earliest examples of *stūpas* known in the Buddhist world. A finial in the form of a closed lotus bud crowns the *stūpa*, below which garlands of cloth are festooned.

The four figures in the niches represent an unusual group. In clockwise order, they are Śākyamuni Buddha in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*); the Bodhisattva Vajrasattva, who may be identified by the *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā* (bell) he holds; Prajñāpāramitā in *dharmacakra mudrā*; and Maitreya Bodhisattva, who sits in a posture of royal ease holding his right hand against his chest and is identified by the *nāgakesara* flower he holds

in his left hand and the *stūpa* in his headdress. Each of these figures signifies the attainment of perfect knowledge, the goal of Buddhism. Śākyamuni is portrayed at the moment when his enlightenment was assured; Vajrasattva, who symbolizes the Buddhist practitioner, represents the promise of enlightenment for the devotee; Prajñāpāramitā, the personification of transcendent wisdom, is the embodiment of enlightenment; and Maitreya, the future Buddha, represents the promise of future enlightenment for all living beings.

It is difficult to locate this *stūpa* in its correct historical and cultural context. Based on its resemblance to Pāla period works, there is no doubt that it is of the "Pāla style." However, because it does not conform precisely to the known stylistic and iconographic patterns of Pāla art, it may not have been a product of a Pāla workshop. Its resemblance to works produced in Nepal and Tibet suggest that it may have been manufactured in a Himalayan atelier that closely modeled its works on Pāla prototypes. Yet the *stūpa* does not conform completely to the expected stylistic and iconographic patterns of Nepali and Tibetan art either, thereby making the attribution problematical.

The main features that suggest that the *stūpa* was made in the Pāla region include the form of the Buddha in *bhūmisparśa mudrā*, which is characteristically Pāla, as well as the form of the elaborate double lotus pedestal. Unusual features for a Pāla work include the presence of inlaid gems, the very open design of the ornamentation of the square base, and the pinched-in, bulbous shape of the dome (which contrasts with the virtually ubiquitous Pāla cylindrical shape). The fact that some of the foliate motifs are highly abstracted also contrasts with the usual Pāla treatment, in which each element would be expected to be rendered carefully and not abstracted into stylized forms such as those surrounding the cusped architectural niches. Further, the iconographic program is not found on surviving metal or stone votive *stūpas* of the Pāla period. While only a few metal *stūpas* from the Pāla period have survived, thus limiting the most directly comparative materials, the huge corpus of hundreds of stone *stūpas* also does not include examples of this iconography or style.

On the other hand, the use of inlay of semiprecious stones suggests ties to Himalayan works produced in Nepal and Tibet. The bulbous dome shape is also characteristic of Tibetan metal *stūpas*, while the treatment of the figures of Vajrasattva and Maitreya recalls the figural style of works made in Nepali ateliers.

Regardless of whether it was made in the Indic region or the Himalayas, this *stūpa* was probably created during the twelfth century. The Pāla schools of metal sculpture were still flourishing at that time, and by then the Tibetans and Nepalis were both producing works of art that were closely modeled upon Pāla prototypes.

## CARVED CONCH SHELL TRUMPET

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Conch shell

L: 6"

Lent by the Kronos Collection

Shells (*kambu*) have served a variety of functions in Indic culture since early times. Cowries (Hindi, *kaurī*) were used like coinage as a medium of exchange,<sup>1</sup> while their close relative, the conch (*śaṅkha*), came to have important ritualistic and symbolic functions.<sup>2</sup>

As a musical instrument, the conch trumpet was used in both secular and religious life. Because its sound could be heard from great distances, it was used to announce the call to battle and therefore came to have almost weaponlike importance in the quest for victory in war. As such a war trumpet, the Hindu god Viṣṇu carries a conch as one of his principal attributes, which he uses to signal the start of battle.

In the realm of religion, the conch trumpet had many levels of symbolism and use.<sup>3</sup> On the simplest level, the sound was used to attract the attention of worshippers during religious ceremonies and to call members of the monastic orders to services. The conch trumpet is sometimes used in Buddhist orchestras, wherein its clear tone and volume underscore many passages of ritual music. To the Buddhists, the sound of the conch represents the powerful voice of the Buddhist teachings going forth across great distances to attract the attention of every living being.

That this conch was used as a trumpet may be determined from the fact that the spiral end has been trimmed to serve as a mouthpiece. In contrast, the other carved conch in this exhibition (cat. no. 52) was intended to be used as a receptacle for water, as indicated by its closed spiral end and pouring spout.

Only a few carved conch shells of the type used in religious ceremonies have survived from early periods of South Asian history. This example was probably carved during the late Pāla period, perhaps the twelfth century, although the workshop cannot be determined. The seated figure contained within an architectural construct is closely related to similar depictions found in stone sculpture and in Pāla period painting (cat. no. 59, center). The temple is distinctive because of the triangular outline of the roof, which rises in a series of diminishing horizontal stages.

Although the identity of the figure seated within the architectural niche may not be determined, it is probably a depiction of a Bodhisattva, thereby indicating that this conch was intended for use in a Buddhist context. The figure sits in the typical posture of royal ease characteristic of Bodhisattvas, with one leg tucked up on the seat and the

other hanging down. The figure's right hand may be in the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*), and the left seems to hold a lotus flower. A second lotus flower appears above the figure's right shoulder.

Conch shells were particularly well suited to decoration arranged in horizontal bands, an organizational pattern seen here. The main figure occupies the central band, while other bands of decoration include foliate and bead motifs. In particular, the three levels of the spiral end have been carved into three separate designs.

As a trading commodity, conch shells apparently had great value, and conches were known to have been used by peoples living in the interior regions of Asia, particularly Nepal and Tibet, who must have acquired them by trade from coastal regions like Bengal.<sup>4</sup>

1. It is believed that the cowrie was the prevalent medium of exchange during the Pāla period. Not a single confirmed example of a Pāla coin has been found. This fact is intriguing, since metal technology was well known in the Pāla period, as demonstrated by the copious and skillful production of metal images. It is puzzling that, unlike the kings of so many other of India's prominent ruling families, the Pāla kings would not choose to immortalize themselves and their empire through coinage.
2. In Buddhism, the conch is one of the eight auspicious symbols (*aṣṭamaṅgala*). For the *aṣṭamaṅgala*, see cat. no. 121.
3. So important was the ceremonial use of the conch trumpet in Indian Buddhism that it was exported to other regions of Asia along with the religion itself. In Tibet, where conch shells could only be acquired through trade, the word *dung* came to be used for both conch and trumpet, suggesting that the Tibetan knowledge about conch trumpets was brought with Buddhism from India.
4. For an Indian example that travelled to Tibet, see cat. no. 52.

## 52

## CARVED CONCH SHELL WATER RECEPTACLE

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Conch shell with silver addition

L: 8"

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the Kronos Collection, 1986 (1986.501.6)

In contrast to the preceding example of a conch shell (*śaṅkha*), which was formed to be used as a trumpet, this carved shell was intended to be used as a water receptacle. While the spiral end of the other example had been cut open to serve as a mouthpiece for the instrument, the spiral end of this shell has been retained intact, allowing the shell to be used to hold liquid in ceremonies. Although the shape of the open end was damaged at some point in the shell's history, a Tibetan silver addition of about the eighteenth century was formed into the shape of a spout, preserving the shell's function as a container for storing and pouring water. Artistic representations of conch shells used as receptacles on altars often occur on the pedestals of images along with other offerings and

ceremonial implements.

While the preceding trumpet conch shell was probably Buddhist, as determined by the Bodhisattva-like figure in the architectural construct, this example is decidedly associated with the Hindu god Viṣṇu, as may be determined from the elaborate and complete Vaiṣṇava iconographic program carried in the decoration of the central band. Viewing the elements of the design in a clockwise fashion, as one would proceed to encounter an iconographic program in most Hindu temples, and beginning to the left of the shell's opening, the ten incarnations (*daśāvatāra*) of Viṣṇu are shown in order. They are Matsya (fish); Kūrma (tortoise); Varāha (boar); Nṛsimha (man-lion); Vāmana (dwarf); Paraśurāma (Rāma with the axe); Rāma (a king); Kṛṣṇa (the dark one); Buddha, who sometimes is included in the list of incarnations; and Kalkin, a future incarnation that has not yet appeared and who will come riding on his horse. The first of the ten, Matsya, is lost, and the second, Kūrma, is badly worn but can be identified by the distinctive tortoise shape.

At the end of the sequence is the principal image of the design, a depiction of the god Viṣṇu seated with his consort Lakṣmī in an architectural pavilion just to the right of the shell's opening. In this specific form, with Lakṣmī seated upon the left knee of Viṣṇu, the pair is called Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa<sup>1</sup> and is a Vaiṣṇavite equivalent to the Umā-Maheśvara of Śaivism, in which the god and goddess are shown in affectionate embrace. Beneath them, Viṣṇu's bird-man vehicle, Garuḍa, seems to hold them aloft. Just to the left of this group, a pair of devotees with their hands in the gesture of reverence (*añjali mudrā*) honors the two deities. As the final image in the sequence, the Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa group is equivalent to the shrine image in a temple and is the ultimate focus of the devotee's worship.

More elaborately carved than the previous example, every inch of the shell's surface has been rendered into foliate and gem designs structured within horizontal bands. The softened contours of what must have once been a crisply carved design indicates the many centuries of ceremonial use of the object.

Based on the accentuated postures of the seated figures and the architectural construct enclosing Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, which rises in horizontal stages, a date of about the twelfth century may be suggested for the carving. The place of manufacture is unknown, but the popularity of Viṣṇu in Bengal during the twelfth century suggests that it may have been made there. If so, the iconography of the *daśāvatāras* of Viṣṇu on this shell is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the *Gītagovinda*, the first text in which all ten incarnations are named, was written in Bengal by Jayadeva, a poet at the court of King Lakṣmaṇasena of the Sena dynasty.

The precise history of this conch shell receptacle is not known, but at some point after it was carved in the

Indic region, it was carried to Tibet where, to compensate for damage it had suffered along the open edge, a silver repair was added. The repoussé work of this silver addition is identified easily as a product of an eighteenth-century, central Tibetan workshop, and the stylized and conventionalized cloud and dragon motif are Tibetan versions of designs that originated in China. It is interesting that, while the Tibetans were Buddhists to the core, this Vaiṣṇava shell was taken to Tibet, where it was not only preserved but also lavishly restored as a treasure still revered centuries after its creation. Perhaps the Tibetans, in their zeal for things Indian and things Pāla, were not always strictly concerned with the subject matter of the religious objects they imported.

PUBLISHED:

Martin Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from The Kronos Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 82-85.

1. The subject is sometimes also called Lakṣmīpati (husband [lord] of Lakṣmī).

53

### SĀCCHA WITH ŚYĀMA TĀRĀ

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. eighth century, pre-Pāla or early Pāla period

Molded clay

H: 2 3/4" W: 3 1/8" D: 3/4"

Stephen P. Huyler

The Sanskrit name for objects of this type, *sāccha*, is believed to be an onomatopoeic rendering of the sound made when wet clay is pressed into a mold during the process of their creation.<sup>1</sup> *Sāccha* are found in virtually every area of the Buddhist world in great numbers and must have been easily and cheaply available to devotees and pilgrims. While any given mold might have been unique, many dozens of *sāccha* were undoubtedly made from each mold.<sup>2</sup>

Many reasons have been cited to explain the practice of creating *sāccha* and their popularity in Buddhist religious practices. Some have suggested that the very act of pressing the wet clay into a mold was meritorious and that it was the devotees, not craftsmen, who actually made the clay impressions from the molds. *Sāccha* apparently were given as offerings at Buddhist sites and may have been carried away by pilgrims and devotees as sacred mementos of their pilgrimages. In Thailand, the production of *sāccha* was apparently inextricably linked with a cult of reverence to deceased teachers and ancestors, for the unbaked clay

used to create them was sometimes mixed with ashes of the deceased.<sup>3</sup> A similar practice of mixing the ashes of deceased teachers with the clay is also known in Tibet. However, it is unknown whether these practices had an Indic precedent. Other uses for *sāccha* might be cited, but until a thorough study of this type of object is completed, it is impossible to be precise about the use of any given example.<sup>4</sup>

In this example, the mold-produced design is deeply recessed behind a raised rim that consists of overlapping, flattened disks, thereby combining the mold technique with hand finishing of the edge.<sup>5</sup> The molded design shows Śyāma Tārā sitting in a relaxed posture atop a double lotus pedestal. She leans against her left arm, while her bent right arm is extended with her hand in the gesture of offering (*varada mudrā*). Behind her head, a halo with a beaded rim indicates her divine status. Her left hand holds the stem of a blue lotus (*nīlotpala*) that rises to her left and identifies her as Śyāma (Dark or Green) Tārā. A *stūpa* appears above her right arm. An inscription, probably the Buddhist consecratory formula, is stamped around the edge of the design. Śyāma Tārā wears a lower garment that falls into folds as it covers her legs, and her upper torso is bare except for a band of cloth across her breasts. She wears armlets, bracelets, a necklace, and earrings, and her hair is piled into a large bun atop her head.

This example was probably produced from a mold that was made around the eighth century, as may be suggested on the basis of comparisons of the figure to examples in metal sculpture of that time.<sup>6</sup> In particular, the full, rounded breasts, narrow waist and hips, and broad shoulders characterize the style. The bodily proportions are youthful and resemble the female type epitomized in early Pāla art and other styles that evolved out of the Gupta idiom.

1. Giuseppe Tucci offers an etymological explanation for the term. See Giuseppe Tucci, *Stupa: Art, Architectonics and Symbolism*, English version of *Indo-Tibetica* 1, ed. Lokesh Chandra, trans. Uma Marina Veschi (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988), 54. Tucci suggests that the term derives from the Sanskrit *sat-chāya*, meaning "perfect image" or "reproduction" and hence images that are similar to one another (as when produced from a mold).
2. For further discussion of the use and meaning of *sāccha* in Buddhism, see cat. no. 165.
3. See Stanley J. O'Connor, "Buddhist Votive Tablets and Caves in Peninsular Thailand," *Art and Archaeology in Thailand* (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1974), 83.
4. Some work has been done on the problem of classification of these objects. See Simon D. Lawson, *A Catalogue of Indian Buddhist Clay Sealings in British Museums* (Ph. D. diss., University of Oxford, 1982).
5. For a virtually identical piece, see Amy G. Poster, *From Indian Earth: 4,000 Years of Terracotta Art* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1986), 180-181, no. 119.
6. Compare to S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 26.

54

#### SĀCCHA WITH A BODHISATTVA

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. eighth century, pre-Pāla or early Pāla period

Molded clay

H: 3" W: 2 3/4" D: 1"

Stephen P. Huyler

The composition, which was created by pressing wet clay into a mold, is deeply inset beneath the rim. Thick and rounded, the rim has been finished with a handmade edging of overlapping, flattened disks.<sup>1</sup>

The main design shows a Bodhisattva sitting frontally with his right leg pendant and his left leg bent up on his seat in the *lalitāsana* pose. His left hand holds what appears to be a staff and his right rests on his knee. He sits atop a double lotus pedestal. An inscription probably recording the standard Buddhist consecratory formula encircles the figure. Behind his head is a halo. He wears minimal jewelry, suggesting a date early in the Pāla period, and has a youthful bodily build.

1. For a virtually identical piece except for the treatment of the edge, see Amy G. Poster, *From Indian Earth: 4,000 Years of Terracotta Art* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1986), 180-181, no. 120.

55

#### SĀCCHA WITH A BODHISATTVA

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. eighth century, pre-Pāla or early Pāla period

Molded clay

H: 5" W: 3" D: 1 1/8"

Stephen P. Huyler

This slightly elongated circular *sāccha* has a cylindrical stem and pointed top, giving a teardrop shape to the overall configuration. While the crimped edge was formed by hand, the main design was created by the imprint of a mold into wet clay.

The Bodhisattva who comprises the main element of the composition sits in a relaxed pose, with his legs bent up and resting on his lotus pedestal. His left arm is bent and holds the stem of an unidentified flower. Just in front of his left arm is a small, seated figure. The Bodhisattva's right hand is bent and makes the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*). Another small figure beneath the right hand seems to be the recipient of the Bodhisattva's offering. A branch of an unidentified plant curves around the head of the central figure, and other elements that are too small and indistinct to be identified fill the surrounding space.

The slender, graceful form of the Bodhisattva suggests that the mold for the *sāccha* was produced around the eighth century.



# SĀCCHA WITH MĀRAVIJAYA SCENE AT BODH GAYĀ

Probably India, Bihar, Nālandā

Ca. tenth or eleventh century, Pāla period

Molded clay

H: 6 1/2" W: 2 1/2"

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1933 (33.50.10)

This *sāccha* is virtually identical to an example that was found at Nālandā, suggesting that it may have been produced there.<sup>1</sup> However, since both the molds and the *sāccha* themselves were easily portable, it is difficult to ascertain a place of manufacture based on the findspot of a single example.

The *sāccha* has a pointed top, below which is a roundel with a stamped *stūpa* design. The inscription surrounding the *stūpa* is so faint that it suggests that the mold from which the design was produced had been used many times prior to the time it was imprinted here. A second stamped design consisting of a temple containing a Buddha in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) occurs below in the elongated cylindrical section and constitutes the principal figurative composition of the *sāccha*.

It is likely that the temple in this representation is the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā, as suggested by its shape and the depiction of the Buddha with his right hand in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*). Although the exact appearance of the Mahābodhi Temple at any point in its lengthy history is subject to debate, it is likely that during the Pāla period it resembled many other structures of the north Indian style in the presence of a high tower (*śikhara*) over the main sanctuary, as seen here. By Pāla times, the main image within the shrine was a representation of Śākyamuni Buddha just moments prior to his enlightenment as he called the earth goddess to witness his right to enlightenment. This event, which took place on the very spot later marked by the erection of the Mahābodhi Temple, was ultimately immortalized in images of the Buddha in the earth-touching gesture.

The Buddha sits atop a double lotus pedestal, below which is a row of small *stūpas*. Two additional *stūpas* flank the temple tower, and yet another is placed in front of the temple tower directly above the head of the Buddha.

Based on the form of the Buddha's body, his facial features, and the outlined treatment of the double lotus pedestal, it may be suggested that the mold for this *sāccha* was produced around the tenth or eleventh century.

1. The comparative piece is being published in Susan L. Huntington, ed., *Archive of Bihar and Bengal Art*, part 1, *Buddhist and Hindu* (Leiden:

57

# LEAF FROM A BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPT OF THE AṢṬASĀHASRIKĀ PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ TEXT

Probably India, Bihar

Copied by the scribe Jayakumāra of the Āpanaka monastery

Colophon dated year 18 of reign of King Rāmapāla (ca. 1105), early twelfth century, Pāla period

Water-based pigments on talipot palm leaf

H: 2 3/8" W: 22 5/16"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase (M72.1.19b)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Illustrated in color and black-and-white

Among the most important vehicles of Pāla influence abroad were illustrated manuscripts of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* text ("Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses"). Considered to be one of the fundamental texts of Mahāyāna Buddhism, copies of the text were placed routinely in monasteries in Nepal and Tibet as a consecration and vivification of the Dharma to be taught and practiced in the monasteries.<sup>1</sup> Manuscripts produced in the Pāla lands apparently were especially prized, for numerous examples—indeed the majority of known Pāla manuscripts—have come out of Himalayan monasteries in recent times. The frequency with which copies of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* text were placed in these monasteries accounts for the very high survival rate of this particular text among the known examples of Pāla manuscripts. Because these dedicatory copies were rarely handled, many have survived in excellent condition. Further, because the Pāla period libraries that served as repositories of Buddhist manuscripts were destroyed in India, it is fortuitous that these texts had been carried to other lands. Venerated as religious objects rather than as sources of the Buddhological knowledge they contained, these cherished manuscripts endured to become precious survivals of a bygone era.<sup>2</sup>

The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* itself contains an explanation for the practice of revering the text as an object of worship. In the Entrusting section, Śākyamuni Buddha says to Ānanda, his principal disciple:

"... a Bodhisattva who wants to acquire the cognition of the all-knowing should course in this perfection of wisdom, hear it, take it up, study, spread, repeat and write it. When, through the Tathagata's sustaining power it has been well written,

in very distinct letters, in a great book, one should honour, revere, adore and worship it, with flowers, incense, scents, wreaths, unguents, aromatic powers, strips of cloth, parasols, banners, bells, flags and with rows of lamps all round, and with manifold kinds of worship."<sup>3</sup>

The text thus explains that the Bodhisattva (the Mahāyāna practitioner) must study the contents of the text, but, in addition, as a general practice, the books themselves should be worshipped and adored (by all).

This leaf is one of only two known pages from an early twelfth-century manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.<sup>4</sup> One of the leaves bears a post-colophon inscription recording the dedication of the manuscript in the eighteenth year of the reign of King Rāmapāla (ca. 1105) and provides other important and interesting information as well. The inscription has been transliterated as follows:

*deyadharmo 'yaṁ pravaramahāyānayāyinaḥ  
malayadeśavinirgata śākyabhikṣu sthavira  
pūrṇacandrasya asya śiṣhya sthavira  
trailokyacandrasya/  
yadatra puṇyaṁ tadbhavatvācāryopādhyāya  
mātāpitṛ pūrvāṅgamaṁ kṛtvā  
sakalasatvarāśēranuttarajñānavāptaya iti//  
mahārājādhirāja śrīmadrāmapāladevarājasamvat  
//18//  
śrīmadāpanaka mahāvihārāvasthita vamatānaka  
jayakumāreṇa likhita iti/<sup>5</sup>*

The inscription begins with a statement that the book was the gift of a monk named Trailokyacandra, who was the disciple of another monk named Pūrṇacandra from the "Malaya country." It then expresses the universal Mahāyāna wish that all sentient beings, including the teacher, parents (*mātāpitṛ*), and ancestors (of the donor), will be able to hear the highest knowledge (transcendental insight). The date of dedication in the eighteenth regnal year of Rāmapāla is then given. The last line of the inscription provides the name of the scribe, Jayakumāra, and the name of the monastery, Āpanaka, to which he belonged and where the work presumably was carried out.

The inclusion of the name of the Āpanaka monastery is of interest,<sup>6</sup> although its meaning in relation to the identification of the artistic school to which the manuscript belonged is limited at this point in our knowledge about the schools of Pāla manuscript painting. Since so few manuscripts have survived out of the thousands that once were produced, it is difficult to identify the various schools of Pāla painting and trace their evolution, even when the name of the monastery where the copy was made is named

in the colophon.<sup>7</sup>

The identification of a place called *malayadeśa* (Malaya country) in the inscription is particularly tantalizing. The term occurs in a number of ancient inscriptions and texts, but apparently several places were known by that name, including portions of what is now the state of Kerala in India, the whole southern tip of India, and a hilly region in central Sri Lanka.<sup>8</sup> These usages may not be the only possibilities. While the precise identification cannot be clarified at this time, it is of interest that the teacher was not from the eastern Indic region, for this information may be added to the already well established corpus of documents recording the dynamic relationships the people of the Pāla lands enjoyed with Buddhists of other regions.

As is typical of the format used in Pāla manuscripts, this leaf bears three paintings. A representation of the Bodhisattva Maitreya appears in the center and two life scenes of Śākyamuni Buddha occur at the sides. On the left is the gift of honey by the monkey, and on the right is the death (*parinirvāṇa*). The second leaf, which could not be included in the exhibition, also has three paintings, namely, a central illustration of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara flanked by two Buddha life scenes at the sides. The illustration on the left shows the Buddha taming the elephant Nālāgiri and that on the right shows the Buddha's descent from Trāyastriṃśa heaven. It may be inferred that the original manuscript would have contained two other illustrated leaves in this group, thereby completing the group of eight Buddha life scenes.<sup>9</sup>

Although illustrations of the eight major Buddha life scenes (*aṣṭamahāprātihārya*) occur with great frequency in Pāla manuscripts of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* text, the correlation between the two is elusive, since the pictures do not illustrate the text directly. While a religious connection must certainly exist to explain the juxtaposition of these illustrations with the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* text, the emphasis on the eight major life events of Śākyamuni Buddha probably also reflects the centrality of this theme in Pāla period art in general.

Maitreya, the subject of the central painting, is recognized by the narrow-spouted mouth-washing vessel (*kuṇḍikā*) that appears to his left, perched atop the stalk of his characteristic *nāgakesara* (*Mesua ferrea*) plant. The flower, with its four distinctive petals and elongated pinnate leaves, are very naturalistically rendered. The Bodhisattva sits with his legs folded in the lotus position (*padmāsana*), with his legs splayed especially widely to his sides. His torso is tilted in an animated fashion to his right, and his head tilts to his left, providing his body with an angular appearance that resembles the thrice-bent (*tribhāṅga*) posture commonly used in depictions of standing figures in late Pāla art. Behind him, a bolster covered in a patterned cloth serves as his backrest. Maitreya wears his hair in the

*jaṭāmukuta* (crown of matted locks) arrangement characteristic of most representations of Bodhisattvas in the Pāla period. He is clad in a skirtlike lower garment, with a sash that crosses his torso. His lower garment is red and detailed with slightly darker red lines. Touches of white and negative spaces, or unpainted areas, indicate the jewelry at the waist. The palms of his hands and soles of his feet are marked with red, presumably as if dyed with henna, as a sign of their symbolic purification. Behind Maitreya's head is a white halo, and the figure, his seat, and his attributes are further enclosed by a red, ovoid halo. Behind him, two triangular decorated elements that extend to either side of his head represent a portion of his throne.

The gift of the monkey at the left of the leaf shows the Buddha with the lower part of his body in profile and his torso in a three-quarter view. His head is turned toward the monkey, who stands to the right and offers the bowl of honey to the Buddha. The Buddha sits in a completely relaxed posture, rather than a formal *āsana*, providing an informal mood to the scene. Narrative rather than iconic, the representation differs from the usual depictions in Pāla sculpture, in which subsidiary elements of the scene are usually absent. Also in contrast to the usual sculptural renderings of the subject, the monkey is not only large but appears four times in the composition, thus placing greater emphasis on the monkey than is generally seen in sculpture. The largest monkey, standing to the right, offers the bowl of honey to the Buddha. So overjoyed was the monkey that the Buddha had accepted his gift that, according to some texts, he began to dance and accidentally fell into a well and was drowned. Other sources claim that he deliberately jumped into the well so that he could reap the merit of this final, generous act toward a being of such exalted status. In either case, the death of the monkey resulted in his being reborn as a minor god (*deva*). The small monkey to the left of the large monkey appears to be dancing after the gift was accepted. The monkey appears a third time, but here only the rear half of his body is shown, for he has already fallen headfirst halfway down the well, which is shown as a blue form beneath the Buddha's seat. A fourth depiction shows the monkey in divine form, having reaped the rewards of his humble gift. Flying in the air against a cloud in his transformed state, he looks back joyfully at the Buddha. While time has progressed for the monkey, or *deva*-to-be, it has stood still for Śākyamuni in this painting, for he is shown in only one position, that of receiving the gift.

The *parinirvāṇa* scene at the right is also very relaxed and informal in mood. The smiling Buddha, looking lively and jaunty in spite of the imminence of his death, leans on his right arm with his body twisted onto his right side, as if he were merely relaxing comfortably on his couch.<sup>10</sup> A smiling devotee above seems to hover over him joyfully, although the somewhat more somber figure of a monk

below suggests the gravity of the event taking place. This latter figure may be the Buddha's cousin Ānanda, who is frequently shown as dark-complected and green in color in Pāla manuscripts.<sup>11</sup> An unusual feature of this representation is the cushion behind Śākyamuni's head; in most depictions of this subject a halo appears behind his head, while here the head is surrounded by a fabric cushion.

In both scenes in which the Buddha occurs, Śākyamuni's robe is bright red with bands of yellow dots at both the hemline and the neckline.<sup>12</sup> This is unusual, since the Buddha's robe is invariably unadorned except under very specialized circumstances. Folds in the drapery are depicted with a series of slightly darker red lines covering the entire surface.

As is typical in Pāla manuscript paintings, the palette consists of a limited number of pigments, which are dominated in this case by red and blue. Approximately equal in value, the strong red and blue vie for the eye of the viewer. On the whole, the colors are applied in a flat manner, with little mixing or modulation, although the impression of mixing is conveyed by the juxtaposition of colors and tones. Visual interest is added to the large expanses of flatly applied color by details such as the flowers on the dark blue background in the monkey scene and the dots on the blue background of the Maitreya composition. The dot technique in particular has generated considerable scholarly debate, for it has been suggested that they might be intended to represent rain or darkness rather than to serve a purely artistic purpose (see also cat. no. 89).

Outlining is used extensively to add definition and richness to the forms. The red outlining of the monkeys in the gift of honey scene heightens the impression of color richness without necessitating great detailing by the artist. The figures of Maitreya and the two Buddhas are outlined in an underdrawing red and are enhanced with a darker red. Finally, a slight shading softens the edges of the lines. Unlike the modeling often found in Western art, which is based on the scientific observation of light and shadow, this is an arbitrary system in which the portion of the body or limb that is closest to the observer appears to be the lightest, while shading is used only around the contours of the form or across the receding surfaces. A careful examination of the lower proper right side of the Maitreya's face shows a line of the lighter underdrawing red just inside the darker "finishing red." The facial features are executed both in underpainting red and dark "finishing" red and have been further highlighted with black.

Although these painted compositions include elements not always found in sculptural depictions and are more detailed in some respects, they are still simple and highly abbreviated. The artists, working within a miniature format, had to make every stroke and every element meaningful.

These paintings, rendered in a very skillful yet free and uninhibited manner, convey the sense of a folk art tradition rather than the work of a highly trained artist of the highest rank. The long, lanky figures of the two Buddhas and the monkeys and the happy facial expressions provide a sense of charm and humor, even though this might not have been the conscious intent of the artist. The draftsmanship is characterized by a slight unevenness of the line, and the coloration lacks the subtlety seen in the finest Pāla paintings. Charming, direct, and visually exciting, these paintings document the breadth of the Pāla painters' art.

JCH and SLH

#### PUBLISHED:

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 106, no. 112; Sarasi Kumar Sarasvati, *Pālajuger Chittrakālā* [Painting of the Pāla Age] (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers Private Ltd., 1978), 143; Pratapaditya Pal, "A Forgotten Monastery of Ancient Bihar," *South Asian Studies* 4 (1988): 83-88.

1. This practice continues to the present day. It is unknown whether there was a Pāla period precedent for the practice.
2. Regrettably, most of the manuscripts that have reached the art market have not been kept intact. Illustrated leaves, which normally command high prices, are generally sold, while the less lucrative, but historically invaluable, leaves of text are often simply destroyed. This tragic situation has resulted in the loss of important historical and religious information and has led to the inaccurate perception of these paintings as decorative, rather than sacred, objects.
3. Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary* (Bollingen, California: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973), 299.
4. The second leaf from this manuscript is also in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, but could not be included in the exhibition. At one time, apparently four leaves from this manuscript were known. See Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 106, no. 112. In addition to the two leaves now in the Los Angeles collection, one more was illustrated and another was unillustrated. The present location of the latter two leaves is unknown. For an illustration of the second Los Angeles leaf, see Pratapaditya Pal, "A Forgotten Monastery of Ancient Bihar" *South Asian Studies* 4 (1988), 83.
5. Published in the Bengali script by Sarasi Kumar Sarasvati in *Pālajuger Chittrakālā* [Painting of the Pāla Age] (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 1978), 143, and transliterated into Devanāgarī script in Pal, "A Forgotten Monastery of Ancient Bihar," 83. Modifications to Pal's transliteration have been made to conform to standard practices.
6. For discussion of this monastery, see Pal, "A Forgotten Monastery of Ancient Bihar," 84. The Āpanaka monastery is also mentioned in inscriptions on four metal images from Kurkihār. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 211, no. 16a; 215-216, nos. 21-23. The image inscriptions record the name as Āpanaka, while the manuscript spelling is Āpanaka, but the variation in the *n* or *ṇ* ligature probably reflects variations in orthography rather than a reference to two different institutions. Pal suggests that Āpanaka (Āpanaka) was located at Kurkihār.
7. The methodology applied in S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, to define the schools of stone and metal sculpture was based on significant numbers of examples in similar styles found at specific sites or in limited regions. Stylistic definitions must be based on statistically significant numbers in order to determine trends and distinctions among various schools. A few surviving examples from one site cannot provide the breadth necessary for the identification of

schools.

8. For some discussion of this complex problem, see D. C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), 243-244, 325; S. M. Ali, *The Geography of the Puranas* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1966), 179-181. Ali discusses the possibility that Malaya may refer to one of the *dvīpas* (islands) that supposedly protrude into the "southern ocean" off of India; however, he discounts the idea that it is an island and concludes that it is a reference to the southern tip of India itself. However, the suggestion that it is an island, or at least a land in the "southern ocean," cannot be dismissed completely in light of the possibility that Malaya, like others of the six *dvīpas* in the list, might be located outside of India proper, for example, in Southeast Asia. The relationship between the name Malaya and the Malay Peninsula may be only coincidental; Ali identifies Āṅga *dvīpa* as the Malay Peninsula (p. 179).
9. The subjects of the paintings on the third illustrated leaf are unknown.
10. It seems clear that the scene shown here is a pre-*parinirvāṇa* scene rather than the actual death. According to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, several teachings took place while Śākyamuni was on his death-bed. In Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka, distinctions are made between the actual death of the Buddha and representations of him while alive but reclining on the couch.
11. He is green in the taming of Nāḷāgiri scene in this same manuscript, thus suggesting that Ānanda is specifically green in this particular manuscript.
12. This is also the case in the depictions of the descent from Trāyastriṃśa and the taming of Nāḷāgiri on the leaf that is not in the exhibition.

#### 58

#### LEAVES FROM A BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPT OF THE AṢṬASĀHASRIKĀ PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ TEXT

Part A (upper two illustrated leaves and leaf of text):  
India, Bihar, Nālandā

Ca. late eleventh century, Pāla period (colophon records date in fifteenth regnal year of King Vīgrahapāla [III?], ca. 1073)

By the calligrapher (*bhāṇaka*) Ānanda of Nālandā

Part B (lower two illustrated leaves):  
India, Bihar (?)

Ca. mid-twelfth century, Pāla period (colophon records a rededication in the eighth regnal year of King Gopāla [III?], ca. 1151)

Both parts:

Water-based pigments on talipot palm leaf

Each leaf approximately 2 3/8" by 22 1/4"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1987.1)

Illustrated in color

More than simply written sources of religious information, Buddhist manuscripts were revered as sacred objects in their own right (see cat. no. 57). Like other consecrated objects, manuscripts were not routinely discarded when they were damaged or partially destroyed. Instead, they were either stored away or repaired for continued use. Not only was it more expedient to replace missing or damaged folios than to recopy the text anew, but the spiritual power residing in the physical object was thereby preserved. Manuscripts that had been in the possession of revered teachers were considered to be especially



empowering. Restored, conserved, and ultimately passed on to disciples, such manuscripts were cherished as part of the physical legacy and religious authority of distinguished individuals.

The palm leaf manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, or Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses, scripture to which these leaves belong is an example of just such a treasured object. Apparently renewed at some point in its history by the addition of replacement pages, the manuscript was the personal possession of such renowned individuals as Śākya Śrī and Bu ston. The historical, cultural, and religious value of this manuscript is therefore immeasurable. Further, because it circulated in Tibet, particularly in the gTsang District, it may have been a specific instrument by which the Pāla style was disseminated in gTsang, making it a significant art historical document as well. Presently consisting of about one hundred leaves, of which four bear illustrations, the manuscript reveals its remarkable history through the style of its paintings and the information contained in its colophon inscriptions.<sup>1</sup>

Although the paintings on the four illustrated folios form a complete iconographic group, they are executed in two distinct styles that are recognized easily by their differences in treatment of line, coloration, and other elements. The leaves of the first style, herewith designated Part A, are the two upper leaves as mounted for display and illustrated here. The two illustrated leaves beneath them are herewith designated Part B. While a difference in style might indicate that more than one artist helped to create the original manuscript, in this case it is more likely that the two styles reflect different phases of work, that is, the initial creation of the manuscript and a subsequent restoration. As will be discussed below, at some point in its history damage apparently occurred to this manuscript and new pages were inserted to replace lost or damaged leaves.

The fifth leaf included in the exhibition (mounted and illustrated as the lowermost leaf) bears inscriptions that help unravel the mystery of the two distinct artistic styles. Unillustrated itself except for two floral motifs, this leaf was the final text page of the original manuscript and bears a Sanskrit inscription recording the original dedication, a second Sanskrit inscription noting a later rededication, and three Tibetan inscriptions that reveal the history of the manuscript through about the fourteenth century.

The earliest Sanskrit inscription records the donation of the manuscript by an individual who is identified as a great Mahāyāna follower named Nāe Suta Ṣoḥā Sitna. Written in the same script as the majority of the manuscript, this inscription appears to be contemporaneous with the Part A illustrated leaves. The offering was made on the second day of the dark half of the month of Phālguna in the

fifteenth regnal year of King Vighrahapāla, who is identified in the inscription as the son of Nayapāla. The only father and son pair with these names in the Pāla lineage are King Nayapāla (reigned ca. 1042-1058) and his son King Vighrahapāla III (reigned ca. 1058-1085). The fifteenth year of Vighrahapāla's reign occurred around 1073, thus providing an approximate date for the creation of the original portion of the manuscript. The non-Sanskritic name of the donor suggests that the donor may have been a foreign visitor to India. The inscription further states that the scribe (*bhāṇaka*) was Ānanda of Śrī Nālandā [monastery]. Although it is not mentioned explicitly, it is likely that Ānanda's work was carried out at Nālandā. The name of the painter is not given, but it may be inferred that the artist was also associated with Nālandā. The fact that the name of the painter is not mentioned suggests that in the culture of the time it was the copying of the sacred text that constituted the most important achievement. Ironically, today it is generally the illustrations that are most highly prized in western cultures. Perhaps the least important part of the manuscripts to their creators, the paintings are often preserved while the texts are discarded due to their perceived minimal monetary value.

The second Sanskrit inscription is in ligatures that are almost identical to those of the previous inscription, although minor differences in the hands are visible. It records a dedication of the manuscript that took place during the eighth year of the reign of King Gopāla. Although there are three kings named Gopāla in the Pāla lineage, only one of them, King Gopāla III, lived after the father and son pair Nayapāla and Vighrahapāla, which is named in the first inscription. The eighth regnal year of King Gopāla III (reigned ca. 1143-1158) occurred around 1151.

The three Tibetan inscriptions record information about the subsequent history of the manuscript through about the fourteenth century. The presence of these three inscriptions, as well as their contents, makes it clear that it was brought to Tibet for Tibetan use, thereby serving as an extremely important document of the transmission of Pāla period Buddhism and Buddhist art to Tibet.

The first Tibetan inscription immediately follows the two Sanskrit inscriptions and is essentially a rerecording of the information about the original scribe that is found in the first Sanskrit inscription. Consisting of an extremely carefully written line of Tibetan *dbus med* (pronounced ūmay), or "headless," script, this record states that the Buddhist scholar Kun dga (Ānanda), who was a resident of Śrī Nālandā [monastery], wrote/drew (*bris*) [this manuscript]. This confirmation and reiteration of the first Sanskrit colophon translates this important information into Tibetan for the benefit of those who could not read the Sanskrit. The Tibetan word *bris* does not distinguish between writing and drawing; however, the Sanskrit term

is specific and makes it clear that Ānanda was the scribe. Judging from the form of the letters, the inscription is not later than the thirteenth century. It is significant that of the information contained in the earliest Sanskrit inscription only the section pertaining to the scribe and his monastic affiliation is included. The information about the Pāla lineage, the date, and the name of the donor are not recorded. To the Tibetans for whom this inscription was made, it was the name of the scribe and the fact that he was associated with Nālandā that were of the greatest interest. The association with the renowned Nālandā monastery probably was especially important in establishing the pedigree and authoritativeness of the manuscript.

The second and third Tibetan inscriptions, which are also written in the headless *dbus med* script, occur on the reverse of the same leaf. The second inscription describes the lineage of ownership of the manuscript among Tibetan teachers up to the time that it came into the hands of an individual named sTang (or, more likely, sTong), who apparently either wrote the lineage or had it inscribed on the leaf. The record of ownership from the time of the creation of the first part of the manuscript in the late eleventh century until it came into the possession of the first individual named is not provided. The third inscription notes a dedication of the book for the benefit of a deceased individual. The second inscription is written in a very tight scholar's hand, while the third is executed in a large, loose running hand more like popular correspondence than a Buddhist scholar's writing.

The second Tibetan inscription has been translated as follows:

"This volume was the precious possession of the Great  
Pandit Śākya Śrī.  
Then it was the precious possession of the translator  
Byams pa dpal.  
Then it was the precious possession of the teacher  
bZhang rings.  
Then it was the precious possession of Bu ston Big  
Mouth.  
Then it was the precious possession of the Great Abbot  
Chos dpal bzang po.  
Then it was the precious possession of mKhas grub  
bLo gros brtan pa.  
Now this volume is mine—sTang (sTong?) the  
translator."<sup>2</sup>

The lineage of ownership may be interpreted further:<sup>3</sup>

1) Mahāpaṇḍita Śākya Śrī (1127-1225) was an Indian from Kashmir who was active in Tibet from 1204 to 1213. He is also known as the Kha che Paṇ chen (great paṇḍita of Kashmir). One of the great proselytizers of Indic Buddhism in Tibet, he was very active in both gTsang and dBus districts,

travelling extensively and frequently teaching and commenting on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, presumably from this very book. Śākya Śrī's early biography is not well recorded (the *Blue Annals* being concerned primarily with his sojourn in Tibet). It is unknown whether he ever visited the Pāla lands, and therefore it cannot be determined if the manuscript came into his possession there or if it had already been transported from the Pāla lands to another place before it came into his possession. Śākya Śrī was ordained in 1149, two years before the date of the second Sanskrit inscription,<sup>4</sup> and it is therefore possible that he was the owner of the manuscript from around that time, later carrying it with him to Tibet.

- 2) Byams pa dpal (Khro phu Tshul khrims shes rabs byams pa dpal) (1172-1220). The third holder of the seat of Khro phu, he went to Nepal and India in 1204 by way of sKyid rong and invited Śākya Śrī to Tibet. He became the chief disciple of Śākya Śrī.<sup>5</sup> In 1212 he dedicated the Khro phu Byams pa, a gigantic image of Maitreya that became a famous site of pilgrimage in the area. Although the exact location of Khro phu is difficult to pinpoint, it is in the immediate vicinity of Phun tshogs (see following).
- 3) bZhang<sup>6</sup> rings was active in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century and taught at Khro phu.
- 4) Bu ston (1290-1364) was the well-known compiler of the first great Tibetan canon, which was housed at Zhwa lu monastery. He belonged to the *mahāmudrā* lineage as taught by bZhang rings,<sup>7</sup> but it is not clear whether he was a direct disciple. He was also a master of the Kālacakra tantric system.<sup>8</sup>
- 5) Chos dpal bzang po is unknown, but undoubtedly lived during the fourteenth century. His name is probably a short form of the name of one of Bu ston's disciples, who passed the book on to dPang Lo tsa ba.
- 6) mKhas grub bLo gros brtan pa, or as he is more properly known, dPang Lo tsa ba bLo gros brtan pa (1276-1342), was a renowned translator and master of the Kālacakra. He and his brother Shong ston rdo rje rgyal mtshan are the founders of the discipline of philology in Tibet. He is known to have travelled to Nepal seven times in search of texts and training. He taught at Sa skya.<sup>9</sup>
- 7) sTang<sup>10</sup> Lo tsa ba is unknown, but probably lived during the fourteenth century.

The third inscription is a dedication of the book for the benefit of an unknown nobleman. It reads:

"This Indian book has been offered as a means for fulfilling the funeral rites of Kun dga' dge legs dbang phyug and in order to gain merit for Kun dga' dpal 'byor

dbang phyug and his entourage and is given to the powerful, perfect Chos kyi rgyal po from 'Jang phun tshogs (Phun tshogs). May all obtain happiness and attain the rank of the mind."<sup>11</sup>

Phun tshogs<sup>12</sup> is on the gTsang po River just north of Lha rtse (see Map 3 at back of catalogue showing dBus and gTsang districts), and the individuals mentioned are unknown but were probably local rulers. The sphere of activities of several of the individuals who possessed the manuscript and the location of Phun tshogs suggest that this manuscript was directly instrumental in creating the early Pāla-based style in gTsang District in Tibet. Specifically, Khro phu Tshul khirms shes rabs byams pa dpal was active at Khro phu, it is known that Bu ston was active at Zhwa lu, dPang Lo tsa ba taught at Sa skya, and the manuscript later was dedicated at Phun tshogs. The relationship between this manuscript and these four locations in Tibet, either at or within a fifty-mile radius of Sa skya, one of the great artistic centers of early Tibet, is extremely important in helping to trace Pāla artistic influence in the region.

The text of the Tibetan inscription that provides the lineage of owners is essentially a validation and documentation of what would normally have been an oral tradition associated with a manuscript. For whatever reason, sTang (sTong?) Lo tsa ba wrote down this lineage. Although other manuscripts may have had equally interesting histories, their stories are not known to us. It is possible that the manuscript was about to pass out of the hands of clerics who would have been trained to remember such lineages and into the hands of laymen who, while probably suitably impressed by its auspicious pedigree, might not have remembered its details. This event immediately may have preceded its rededication on behalf of the deceased Kun dga' dge legs dbang phyug.

Although the hundred or so pages of the manuscript have not been studied to determine how many of them belonged to the original manuscript dedicated during the reign of King Vīgrahapāla, it is likely that at least the Part B illustrated leaves are replacements. A probable time for such a repair would have been when the manuscript was rededicated during the reign of Gopāla III, for rededication is a common practice when an image or other religious object has been restored.

Another possibility for the occasion of the restoration is suggested by a passage in the *Blue Annals*. A section discussing Śākya Śrī, the first owner named in the second Tibetan inscription of the manuscript, describes his sojourn in Tibet. Apparently, once, while preaching a commentary on the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (Prajñāpāramitā) at sNar (thang), portions of Śākya Śrī's book of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* *Prajñāpāramitā* were taken away by "Tārā." Referring to both a raven and the Buddhist deity, the term Tārā has been interpreted to mean that a manifestation of Tārā in

the form of a raven snatched away some of the pages of the book during the recitation. The leaves stolen by the bird later were discovered at sPo khang, where they were preserved.<sup>13</sup> But in the meantime, the great *paṇḍita* was left with only part of a manuscript, which, though the *Blue Annals* does not report, may have been supplemented with new pages to replace those that had been lost.<sup>14</sup>

However, tempting as it might be to relate this manuscript to the incident recorded in the *Blue Annals*, the arguments against this possibility cannot be ignored. First, the reason for the rededication of the manuscript during the reign of Gopāla III would need to be explained by something other than a restoration. Further, if this were the very manuscript that had been seized by the raven, it is curious that this incident would not be recorded in the second Tibetan inscription, which gives the pedigree of the lineage of owners. The style of the paintings on the Part B leaves is also of great importance in determining the date of the restoration; however, until more is known about the schools of Pāla painting and the early Pāla-based styles in Tibet it is difficult to be certain whether the Part B pages were executed in India during the reign of Gopāla III or were done in Tibet by artists replicating the Pāla style. It is also possible that the paintings were done by a Pāla artist who had travelled to Tibet.

The four illustrated leaves are in the typical Pāla format, which consists of three paintings per page. The central composition on each leaf shows a Buddhist deity, while the two side illustrations depict life events of Śākyamuni Buddha. The eight events are the standard *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* set. The iconography may be diagrammed as follows (Buddha life events are numbered in sequence):

Part A		
1) Birth of Gotama	Prajñāpāramitā	2) Māravijaya
3) First Sermon	Mañjuśrī	4) Miracle at Śrāvastī
Part B		
5) Descent from Trāyastriṃśa	Avalokiteśvara	6) Taming of Nālagiri
7) Gift of Honey	Śyāma Tārā	8) Parinirvāṇa

Except for Prajñāpāramitā and Mañjuśrī, who are personifications of the text, the illustrations of the eight life events, Avalokiteśvara, and Śyāma Tārā do not directly correlate with the text. It may be suggested that these subjects, along with the book itself, express three of the major aspirations of the layperson: to gain merit (causing the book to be made), to attain rebirth in a heavenly realm (the production of the *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* scenes),<sup>15</sup> and to receive safe passage through one's present life (the depictions of Avalokiteśvara and Śyāma Tārā, who are

renowned as protective deities).

The illustrations in Part A relate very closely to many of the well-known Pāla paintings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in terms of palette, draftsmanship, use of color, composition, and figural style. Displaying the full richness of Pāla painting at its best, the illustrations are exquisitely drawn, finely detailed, and beautifully colored. The skin tones of the green figures attending the Buddha in the first sermon scene, the female upon whom Queen Māyā leans in the birth scene, and the two females attending Prajñāpāramitā are especially subtly rendered, giving the impression that their skin glows. The refinement of the facial features, the precision with which the hands are drawn, and the rich detailing of elements such as textiles and foliage all reflect the highest level of craftsmanship that flourished at Nālandā, where the paintings presumably were created, during the apogee of its influence and power.

In contrast, the illustrations of Part B are executed in a radically different hand that is far less skilled and sophisticated. Schematically rendered in comparison with the Part A paintings, some of the compositions even seem to be unfinished. For example, in the representation of Śyāma Tārā some details, such as the lotus pedestal or the figure to her right, only seem to have been sketched out but not completed. The style of the figures in this composition seem to reflect the attempt to capture the rich coloration of the green skin tones of various green figures in Part A, but in an abbreviated, shorthand manner. In particular, the harsh black outline around the figure of Śyāma Tārā contrasts with the subtle renderings of the green figures in Part A.

Another feature that distinguishes the two sets of leaves is the use of a white sky or white background in all but one of the Part B compositions. This feature, which increases the unfinished appearance of the paintings, is highly unusual in the known corpus of Pāla manuscript paintings.<sup>16</sup>

Just as those things that had been used or touched by the Buddha were venerated as *paribhogika* objects, this manuscript—associated with a series of important individuals—is imbued with spiritual power beyond the religious message of the words it records. A vehicle by which a distinguished line of individuals transmitted the Buddhist teachings, this manuscript is a powerful reminder that religious objects are made for religious purposes. Establishing historical information about the creation of a work, such as its date and the names of its artists and patrons, is only the preface to its story. The subsequent history of the work and its service in fulfillment of the purposes for which it was made is the story itself. Tragically, such information too often is lost, casually discarded, or even purposely destroyed.

JCH and SLH

PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 35, fig. 11.

1. The inscriptions originally were read by an expert whose name we do not know. The information was supplied to the Asia Society at the time the manuscript was purchased and given to us by the Asia Society for our study of the manuscript. We would like to acknowledge the work of this anonymous individual, to whom we are greatly indebted.
2. Translation by an anonymous translator, provided by the Asia Society. Tibetan spellings have been changed to the Wylie system of transliteration.
3. Compiled primarily from George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), vol. 2 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1953); reprint, 2 vols. in 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979). Hereinafter *Blue Annals*.
4. The date of ca. 1151 for the second rededication is subject to future revisions of Pāla chronology that might alter the presumed date of Gopāla III's eighth regnal year.
5. *Blue Annals*, 708-711.
6. Spelled bZhan in the inscription.
7. *Blue Annals*, 335.
8. *Blue Annals*, 786-787.
9. *Blue Annals*, 634.
10. Vowel uncertain because of damage to leaf. The anonymous translator has read it as sTong, but it could also be sTang. The name means "the translator from sTang (or sTong)," and there are a number of individuals who used either of these regional designations. The term is therefore not specific enough to allow an identification.
11. Following the anonymous translator with substitution of Wylie system of transliteration.
12. Phun tshogs is famous for the Jo nang monastery, which is renowned because it was the home institution of Tāranātha (1575-[after 1631]), author of the famous rGya gar chos 'byung (literally, "History of the Dharma in India," but usually translated as "History of Buddhism in India"). The Jo nang became an important subject of Tibetan Buddhism and had as its major monastery the rTag brtan phun tshogs gling, which maintained a major printing establishment. It is quite possible that this copy of the *Aṣṭasāhasika Prajñāpāramitā* served as the consecrating text for one of the monasteries in the area.
13. *Blue Annals*, 1068.
14. In order to determine whether this manuscript could be the very one described in the *Blue Annals*, it would be necessary to study the complete text to determine whether some pages are missing and how many might be replacements. Considering the historical importance of this manuscript, this would be a worthwhile project.
15. See Appendix I.
16. It is interesting that some fragments of a palm leaf manuscript presently housed at the site museum in Pagan, Myanmar (Burma), also bear this distinctive feature. It is unknown whether this fragmentary manuscript was produced by a Pāla artist or one elsewhere, perhaps in Myanmar.



LEAF FROM A BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPT OF THE  
AṢṬASĀHASRIKĀ PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ TEXT

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Water-based pigments on talipot palm leaf

H: 2 1/2" W: 21 3/4"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli  
and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates  
Purchase (M72.1.23)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Illustrated in color and black-and-white

This single surviving illustrated leaf of a manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* ("The Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses") is an eloquent example of Pāla painting at its best. Displaying controlled yet vibrant draftsmanship, jewellike coloration, and rich detailing, the paintings suggest what must have been the original beauty of the complete manuscript.

As is typical in Pāla manuscripts of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the illustrations show scenes from the life of Śākyamuni Buddha. Although in some manuscripts only two life scenes are illustrated on a page and another subject, such as a Bodhisattva, occupies the central position (cat. no. 57), this leaf bears representations of three life scenes. On the left is the Buddha's descent from Trāyastriṃśa heaven, on the right is the birth, and in the center is the miracle he performed at Śrāvastī. The central Buddha faces outward, while the additional Buddha to his left faces the left and that on the right faces the right. The Buddha in the Trāyastriṃśa scene at the left is turned toward the Buddha in the central composition, while Queen Māyādevī in the birth scene at the right also turns toward the central panel. Also facing the central figure are two additional figures in decorative panels surrounding the holes through which the cord that held the manuscript together was strung. Thus, the stances and gazes of figures in the individual compositions create a highly dynamic composition in which the separate pictorial units of the leaf are unified even across the sections of text.

The Trāyastriṃśa scene is highly unusual, for in textual descriptions as well as Pāla sculptural representations of this subject Śākyamuni is attended by Indra and Brahmā when he returns to earth (cat. no. 9). However, here, while the Buddha is attended by Indra, his other two companions are the Hindu gods Śiva and Viṣṇu.<sup>1</sup> Indra, who is said to have a thousand eyes, is recognized as the yellow figure at the left by the eyes painted all over his body. The white figure immediately to the Buddha's right is Śiva, shown as an ascetic with matted locks, an ash-covered body, and a tiger skin garment. At the extreme right of the composition is the blue, four-armed Viṣṇu. Although the original intentions of the makers of this

painting are unknown, the modification to the iconography suggests an attempt to depict the most powerful Hindu gods, Śiva and Viṣṇu, in a position subservient to that of the Buddha.

The birth scene is a standard interpretation of the subject, except for the presence of an unidentified female divinity. Queen Māyā grasps the branch of the tree while the infant Buddha-to-be emerges from her right side. The god Indra, who typically attends this event, stands to the left and holds the pole of an umbrella, the canopy of which is not depicted but is implied as if behind the tree. Māyā leans on a female attendant, while the unidentified female divinity stands to her right. Easily recognized as a deity because of her halo, this blue female is not usually shown in representations of the birth. As is common in sculpted representations of the subject, the newborn child is represented a second time, standing between Indra and Māyādevī.

The central scene shows the Buddha and the Buddhas he created as part of the miracle at Śrāvastī within a stepped architectural construct of a type seen frequently in Pāla manuscript paintings. Front-facing, seated in lotus position (*padmāsana*), and displaying the teaching gesture (*dharmacakra mudrā*), the central figure looks out directly at the beholder while all other figures appearing on this leaf and in most Pāla manuscript compositions are shown with their faces in a three-quarter view.

In keeping with the usual Pāla practice, the palette of the paintings is dominated by red, blue, yellow, and green, while black and white and a few other tones are used to enhance the forms. Skin colors are varied, at times clearly in response to iconographic requirements. The blue and white colors are appropriate for Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively, as in the Trāyastriṃśa scene, but the green color of Māyādevī's female attendant seems to be arbitrary.

Although colors are generally applied in a flat manner, the coordination of adjacent colors gives the impression of shading and modeling in spite of the use of an outlining technique. For example, the yellow color of Māyādevī's skin is given a warm glow and a sense of volume by the addition of a red outline. Other figures similarly are rendered by the use of one color for the main areas and another for the outline, thus adding depth, warmth, and volume to the forms.

Many elements that occur in Pāla sculpture are also seen in the Pāla paintings. For example, hierarchic scaling is strictly observed. The central, most important figure in each composition is larger than the others, although the scale is not so dramatically rendered that the other figures seem unnaturally small. Other devices, such as providing slightly stooped postures for the subsidiary figures, are also used to convey the relative status of the figures. However, in painting it is common to find details

that were not included in sculpture or that originally may have been added by the painting of sculptures, but lost over the centuries. For example, the central Buddhas in the Trāyastriṃśa and Śrāvastī scenes wear patchwork robes of a type described in texts but not normally found in Pāla sculpture. Flowers appear in the sky areas here and in many other Pāla manuscript representations, but this feature is not present in sculptural depictions.

The paintings are richly ornamented and detailed, suggesting that painting styles had kept abreast of the growing tendency toward elaboration of form that is visible in sculpture in the late Pāla period. There is an exuberant richness of detailing in the rain of flowers, the architectural setting in the central scene, and even the foliage of the tree behind Queen Māyādevī in the birth scene.

Based upon comparison with manuscript illustrations in texts with dated colophons, it may be suggested that the paintings were produced in the twelfth century. However, since there is no internal evidence such as a colophon to reveal where this manuscript was produced, the question of its provenance must remain open until much more is known about the styles and schools of Pāla painting.

JCH and SLH

#### PUBLISHED:

Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 3 vols. (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949), vol. 3, pl. A; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 106-107, no. 115; Gerald James Larson, Pratapaditya Pal, and Rebecca P. Gowen, *In Her Image: The Great Goddess in Indian Asia and The Madonna in Christian Culture* (Santa Barbara: University of California, Santa Barbara, Art Museum, 1980), 53; Susan L. Huntington with contributions by John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York and Tokyo: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1985), 406-407, pls. 28 and 29; Pratapaditya Pal and Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Buddhist Book Illuminations* (New York and Paris: Ravi Kumar and Richard Lyon-Chimera Books, [1988]), 67-68.

60

#### SIX LEAVES FROM A BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPT

Eastern India or Bangladesh

Ca. twelfth century, Pāla period

Water-based pigments on talipot palm leaf

Each leaf approximately 2 1/2" by 17 1/2"

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Nasli and Alice

Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon

(68.8.114.a-f)

All leaves not shown at all venues

Illustrated in color and black-and-white

These leaves belong to a manuscript that has been dispersed.<sup>1</sup> An inscription on one of the leaves records a reading of the text in the Newar Era 354 (A.D. 1234).<sup>2</sup> From the Newar Era date, which was used only in Nepal, it may be inferred that the manuscript was carried to Nepal around A.D. 1234 or earlier. It is unknown how this date relates to the date of creation of the manuscript or its journey to Nepal.<sup>3</sup> The manuscript apparently still was in use two centuries later, as may be determined from folio numbers written in the Newari script of about the fifteenth century that were added to some of the leaves.

The format of these leaves differs from that of the other Pāla manuscripts included in this exhibition, which have three major illustrations per page. In this manuscript, the illustrated leaves have a single central composition showing a Buddhist deity, with additional pictorial embellishments around the binding holes and at the ends. Some of the leaves are of special interest because the designs at the ends show representations of *stūpas*. The form of these *stūpas* is similar to the type known in Tibet as the bKa' gdams *chos rten* (pronounced Kadam chorten), which is ubiquitous in Tibet from the eleventh century through about the fourteenth century. The similarity is so close that it must be suggested that this motif documents an Indic prototype for the bKa' gdams *chos rten*.

The identification of the text of this manuscript is unconfirmed.<sup>4</sup> However, the illustrations show deities of a Vajrayāna pantheon. Although well known in Buddhist textual sources of the Pāla period, many deities of the Vajrayāna pantheon are rarely encountered in Pāla art. By their very nature, such esoteric subjects were limited to dissemination among the initiated, and therefore it is likely that images such as these were produced in much smaller numbers than subjects of a more popular nature, such as Buddha life scenes. The prevalence of such subjects in the artistic repertoires of Nepal and Tibet based on Pāla sources makes these survivals precious indeed, for they document the roots of Vajrayāna iconography in Pāla India.

The six deities illustrated on these leaves include three representations of Jina Buddhas, Hevajra, an unidentified protective deity of the Dharmapāla type, and

1. The second leaf from the manuscript dated in the eighteenth regnal year of Rāmapāla (see cat. no. 57), which is not in the exhibition, bears an illustration of the Trāyastriṃśa scene in which the Buddha is attended by Indra and Brahmā in the usual fashion. That illustration also bears a representation of the nun Utpalā, who kneels at the Buddha's feet as sometimes she does in sculptural depictions.

Vajravārāhi. Specifically, they may be listed as follows according to the Newari folio numbers, followed by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts accession number:

- Folio 121 (68.8.114.f) Hevajra
- Folio 144 (68.8.114.a) Vairocana Vajra Tathāgata
- Folio 162 (68.8.114.b) Amitāyus Vajra Tathāgata
- Folio 177 (68.8.114.c) Ratnasambhava Vajra Tathāgata
- Folio 196 (68.8.114.e) Unidentified Dharmapāla type of deity
- Unnumbered folio (68.8.114.d) Vajravārāhi

The highest folio number of these six leaves is 196, suggesting the extensiveness of the original manuscript, which must have had over two hundred folios, that is, some four hundred or more pages of text. The fact that the numbers are not consecutive indicates that the illustrated leaves occurred throughout the text rather than as a group, in contrast to the usual pattern seen for Buddha life scenes.

Hevajra (folio 121 [68.8.114.f]) is a well-known member of the tantric meditation pantheon and occurs widely in Pāla art and its Himalayan derivatives.<sup>5</sup> As an *iṣṭadevatā* (chosen deity), he may serve as the selected deity for an individual practitioner. His complex iconography, manifested through his multiple heads, legs, arms, and attributes, is a detailed explanation of the individual process of spiritual liberation. In this example, Hevajra is blue and stands atop a multicolored lotus pedestal. His attributes, which are difficult to identify because of their small scale, are held in skull cups that he carries in his hands. Behind him is an aura of red flames.

The three Jina Buddhas appear in esoteric six-armed forms that otherwise may be unknown in the surviving corpus of Pāla art. The Jinās are manifestations of the transcendental insights (*jñāna*) realized by Śākyamuni (and all other Buddhas) and have no independent existence. The iconography of these specific forms conforms to their occurrence in two *maṇḍalas* of the so-called Ngor cycle, the "Thirty-two Deity Guhyasamāja Akṣobhyavajra Maṇḍala."<sup>6</sup>

Each of the Jinās has four faces (three are visible and the fourth is implied at the rear). Looking almost like Bodhisattvas rather than Buddhas, the figures are crowned (*mukūṭadhārin*) and wear their hair in the *jaṭāmukūṭa* style, as a crown of matted locks. Each figure also is adorned with jewelry.

The Jinās may be identified by their colors and the attributes they hold in their hands. Specifically, these attributes are the emblems associated with the *kula* (lineage or family) of each of the Jinās. These are the *vajra* symbolic of Akṣobhya, the gem (*ratna*) symbolic of Ratnasambhava, the lotus (*padma*) symbolic of Amitābha, the sword (*khaḍga*) symbolic of Amoghasiddhi, and the wheel (*cakra*) symbolic of Vairocana. During the process of meditation,

each deity in turn assumes the central position, and his attribute supplants the *vajra* held in the central pair of hands of Akṣobhya. The central pair of hands also holds a bell (*ghaṇṭā*) that remains constant throughout. Thus, the position of the *vajra* appears to rotate in the hands of the deities, thereby also altering the positions of the other attributes. Each Jina Buddha carries all five of the symbols, thus underscoring their interdependence and their identity as a whole.

The following are the identifications of the Jina Buddhas and their attributes. Their respective colors and the directions they preside over are also included. (Hands always refer to proper left and right of the figure.)

Vairocana, white, eastern direction, folio 144 (68.8.114a):  
Principal arms crossed in *vajrahūmkāra mudrā*, the left carrying a bell (*ghaṇṭā*) and the right carrying a wheel (*cakra*)

Upper right carries a lotus (*padma*)

Lower right carries a five-pronged *vajra*

Upper left brandishes a sword (*khaḍga*)

Lower left carries a double lotus (*padma*) bearing a gem (*ratna*)

Ratnasambhava, yellow, southern direction, folio 177 (68.8.114c):

Principal arms crossed in *vajrahūmkāra mudrā*, the left carrying a bell (*ghaṇṭā*) and the right carrying a gem (*ratna*) on a lotus (*padma*)

Upper right carries a lotus (*padma*)

Lower right carries a wheel (*cakra*)

Upper left carries a sword (*khaḍga*)

Lower left carries a five-pronged *vajra*

Amitāyus, red, western direction, folio 162 (68.8.114b):

Principal arms join in *dharmacakra mudrā* and hold a lotus (*padma*) and a bell (*ghaṇṭā*)

Upper right carries a five-pronged *vajra*

Lower right carries a wheel (*cakra*)

Upper left carries a sword (*khaḍga*)

Lower left carries a lotus supporting a gem (*ratna*)

The two other Jinās that would complete the set are:

Amoghasiddhi, green, northern direction:

Principal arms in an uncertain position, the right hand carrying a *khaḍga* or a *viśvavajra* (crossed *vajra*) and the left possibly carrying a bell (*ghaṇṭā*)

Upper right carries a lotus (*padma*)

Lower right carries a wheel (*cakra*)

Upper left carries a *vajra*

Lower left carries a lotus supporting a *ratna* (gem)

Vajradhara (Guhyasamāja Akṣobhyavajra), center:

Principal arms crossed in *vajrahūmkāra mudrā*, the left carrying a bell (*ghaṇṭā*) and the right carrying a *vajra*. In most *maṇḍalas* Vajradhara is depicted

embracing his female Buddha consort,  
Sparsavajrī.<sup>8</sup>

Upper right carries a lotus (*padma*)

Lower right carries a wheel (*cakra*)

Upper left carries a sword (*khaḍga*)

Lower left carries a lotus supporting a gem (*ratna*)

The Dharmapāla (Dharma-protector) (folio 196 [68.8.114e]) is a type of protective deity, as the name for this category of being implies. Although Dharmapālas are not always shown in fierce forms, this figure is clearly *krodha* (fierce) in nature. Plump and dwarfish, the figure stands in an aggressive stance against a flaming red aura. He has bulging eyes and bared fangs. He is blue in color, although his two additional faces are white and red.

Vajravārāhī (Vajra Sow) is also shown in a *krodha* (fierce) form.<sup>9</sup> Dancing in an animated dancing posture that is a standing variant of *ardhaparyāṅkāśana* (half-sitting posture), she is two-armed and holds a skull cup (*kapāla*) in her left hand and a chopper (*karttikā*) in her right. Her bulging eyes, fangs, flaming aura, and long dishevelled hair convey her fierce nature. One of her chief identifying features, a sow's face, appears at the proper right side of her face. Vajravārāhī, a female Buddha, sometimes accompanies Cakrasaṃvara<sup>10</sup> and sometimes occurs alone as the central deity of various *maṇḍalas*.

In contrast to manuscript paintings of Buddha life scenes (cat. nos. 57-59), which are narrative, these images are iconic in nature. Each deity is shown isolated, without landscape or other participants in the action. All three of the Jinas sit within archways that suggest a temple enclosure. Because the Jinas have inherent directional associations, it is likely that the architectural settings are meant to imply the different directional faces of the same temple.

The figures are in the typical twelfth-century Pāla style, with accentuated postures and long limbs. The faces of the Jinas in particular are typical and are characterized by their large, upturned eyes and curvaceous eyebrows. Although the palette consists of colors normally used in Pāla paintings, such as red, blue, and yellow, the extensive use of black in the backgrounds of these compositions creates a more somber effect. Shading, which is used mainly for the lighter colored figures, is not as subtly used as in many other examples of Pāla paintings.

The linear elements of the paintings are freely rendered, and paint has been applied in an almost sketchy manner for minor details of the composition. For example, the coloration of the lotus petals of the lotus pedestals upon which the figures sit or stand seems to have been applied quickly, and the color does not extend to the edges of the forms. This rapidly executed style gives an animated appearance to the works and lends a sense of spontaneity. Architectural details are also sketchily drawn and colored,

yet minute details have been added. For example, the architectural constructs enfaming the Jina Buddhas are decorated with lions, figures, foliate motifs, and in two cases (folios 144 and 162) *kīrttimukha* masks at the tops. The arch itself is a wonderfully loose and freely drawn cascade of vinescrolls enlivened by gamboling animals. These impressionistic little creatures lend a vital and animated air to the whole composition, and the quality they impart is rare in Pāla manuscript painting. In the background against the black sky are a variety of birds and palm trees depicted in much the same fresh, freely drawn manner.

Based on comparisons with securely dated paintings, it may be suggested that the paintings were created around the late twelfth century.<sup>11</sup> However, the school to which they belong is unknown. When the leaves were published originally, the manuscript was assumed to be Nepali, probably based on the Newar Era inscription.<sup>12</sup> The Asia Society leaves have been published as belonging to the Bihar school of painting.<sup>13</sup> Although the study of the schools of Pāla painting is still in its infancy, it seems most likely that these paintings are the products of a Bengali atelier rather than one in Bihar.

Iconographically complex and richly detailed, the paintings on these leaves display the late Pāla idiom that became highly influential in the Himalayan regions of Nepal and Tibet. Their esoteric subject matter is also a link with the Himalayan traditions, where emphasis on deities of the complex Vajrayāna Buddhist pantheon became so prevalent. Because this specific manuscript was transported to Nepal by the first part of the thirteenth century, it also is an important document of the means by which Pāla art was spread throughout the Himalayan region.

JCH and SLH

PUBLISHED:

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 106-108, no. 117 (not illustrated). (For publication information on other known leaves from this manuscript, see note 1.)

1. Other illustrated leaves from this manuscript are in the collections of The Asia Society, New York (accession number 1979.53.1-4), and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (accession number M.72.1.24). For publication of the leaves in The Asia Society, see The Asia Society, comp., *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 27. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art leaves have not been published, but will be included in the forthcoming catalogue of the Indian paintings. At least fourteen illustrated leaves and one unillustrated fragment were known at the time the manuscript belonged to Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck. See Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 106-108, no. 117 (not illustrated). It is possible that the Heeramanecks owned other leaves that were not included in the group



published in the Boston catalogue. The Asia Society leaves also were published in Pratapaditya Pal and Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Buddhist Book Illuminations* (New York and Paris: Ravi Kumar and Richard Lyon-Chimera Books, [1988]), 69, fig. 21; 80, pl. 10. However, the authors did not notice the connection between them and the Los Angeles and Virginia leaves.

2. The leaf with this inscription is in The Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Information on the reading kindly was supplied by The Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Newar Era (Newar *samvāt*) is equivalent to A.D. 880.
3. It might be argued that the manuscript actually was made in Nepal by a Pāla artist and scribe. However, it seems more likely that it was created in the Pāla realm and later carried to Nepal.
4. The manuscript was identified as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* when the manuscript was first published in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal*, 106-108. Later, the text was described more generally as a *Prajñāpāramitā* text in Pal and Meech-Pekarik, *Buddhist Book Illuminations*, 69, 80. Because of the esoteric iconography of the paintings, it must be considered that the text may be something else altogether. However, this issue needs to be studied.
5. For a Hevajra *maṇḍala*, see cat. no. 118. For the iconography of Hevajra, see David L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).
6. Published only in Ngor Thar rtshe mkhan po, bSod nams rgya mtsho, *Tibetan Maṇḍalas: The Ngor Collection*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983), no. 42 and/or 43.
7. The *khaḍga* and the *viśvavajra* are interchangeable symbols of the Amoghasiddhi *kula*.
8. Based on occurrence in the Ngor *maṇḍalas*.
9. An inscription under this illustration and some of the others appears to have been added at a late date. The script and language have not been identified.
10. The Tibetan scholastic interpretation of the iconography of Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī is presented in detail in Appendix II.
11. It originally was thought that the Newar Era date equivalent to A.D. 1234 referred to the date of the manuscript's creation. See Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal*, 108.
12. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal*, 108.
13. Pratapaditya Pal and Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Buddhist Book Illuminations*, 69, fig. 21 and 80, pl. 10.



PART II

THE PĀLA LEGACY ABROAD:  
THE TRANSMISSION TO SOUTHEAST ASIA  
AND SOUTHERN CHINA

Susan L. Huntington

# INTRODUCTION TO SOUTHEAST ASIA AND SOUTHERN CHINA

Contacts between the Indic world and Southeast Asia had been ongoing for nearly a millennium by the time the Pāla dynasty rose to power in the eastern Gangetic region.<sup>1</sup> Trade routes had been forged by earlier generations of adventurers, and markets and emporia had become melting pots of goods from India, Southeast Asia, and China. Both Buddhism and Hinduism had been introduced to the peoples of Southeast Asia, and empires fashioned on Indic principles of kingship were already flourishing.

Thus Pāla culture did not arrive in Southeast Asia as a pioneer, but rather as a participant in an already active international arena in which several other major powers played principal roles. The story of Pāla cultural impact on Southeast Asia is inextricably linked to the destinies of these other major participants—including other Indic dynasties, primarily the Cōlas of south India; major Southeast Asian kingdoms of the day, most notably Pagan and Śrīvijaya; the Chinese, particularly during the Tang dynasty (618-906), when Chinese maritime power was at an apogee; and the Arabs, who became a major force in the complex pattern of maritime trade during the Pāla ascendancy. Sri Lanka, the teardrop-shaped island nation off the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent, also played a vital role in this drama, for Sri Lankan Buddhism became Pāla Buddhism's most powerful rival in Southeast Asia. Ultimately, it was the Sri Lankan form of Buddhism and its accompanying culture that left the more lasting legacy in mainland Southeast Asia, although not in the islands of Indonesia.

The cultural associations between the Indic world and Southeast Asia arose naturally from the geographic relationships between the regions. In this setting, the Bay of Bengal was the centerpiece (fig. 14). The western rim of the Bay of Bengal—a roughly triangular body of water—is formed by the eastern coast of the Indian peninsula; the eastern rim is formed by the western edge of the Southeast Asian mainland. The dynamics between the eastern coastal regions of India and the western part of Southeast Asia are not difficult to imagine. Indeed, during the first millennium A.D., maritime routes edged the coast and crisscrossed the Bay of Bengal, inextricably linking the kingdoms on India's east coast with the Southeast Asian kingdoms opposite the bay. The regions along India's eastern coast—Bengal,

Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamilnadu—represent the sources of most of the Indian cultural influences that have been felt in Southeast Asia at one time or another.

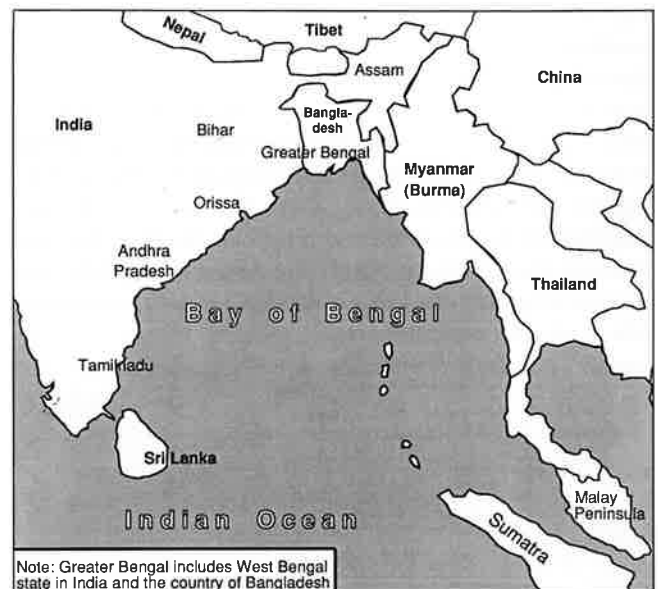


Figure 14. Map of Bay of Bengal and surrounding regions.

At the apex of this roughly triangular configuration is the Bengal region, the eastern flank of the Pāla territories and the delta of India's major trade artery—the Ganges River. From Bengal, ships could sail along both the eastern and western coastlines of the Bay of Bengal. This position linked Bengal not only with its Southeast Asian neighbors, but with the kingdoms further south along India's eastern coast as well. The extent to which the Pāla kings actually controlled the valuable sea routes beyond Bengal is unknown. A verse in the *Rāmacarita* describes the second Pāla king, Dharmapāla, as the "light of (Samudra's [Ocean's]) race, whose fleet of stone-boats appeared splendid, when it crossed the sea (floating) like bitter gourds, (and) whose pure fame also became resplendent after having crossed the sea."<sup>2</sup> However, the political ambitions of the Pālas and other dynasties ruling portions of Bengal do not seem to have included control of the sea routes. Instead, Bengal and the adjacent region of Bihar

benefitted from the international trade activities of the period, while their kings concentrated on securing their territories and controlling the lucrative trade along the Ganges River and its tributaries.

The Bengal region was also connected to the Southeast Asian mainland by overland routes, particularly through Assam. Most strongly affected by this land contact was Myanmar (Burma). Not only did the art and culture of Myanmar profoundly experience the impact of Pāla culture, but Myanmar served as a center from which Pāla influence was distributed to other regions of the mainland.

The Pāla association with Southeast Asia was not limited to the regions rimming the Bay of Bengal, for active maritime routes also linked the Bay of Bengal with the trade centers of the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea (fig. 15). At the center of this vast expanse was the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula and the nearby islands that are now part of Indonesia, particularly Sumatra and Java. Serving as both a geographical and cultural watershed between the Indian and Chinese worlds, these territories were the prized domain of the kings of Śrīvijaya from around the seventh through the thirteenth centuries. Holding the key to passage through the Strait of Malacca between the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula and northern Sumatra, the kings of Śrīvijaya played a dominant role in the international arena.

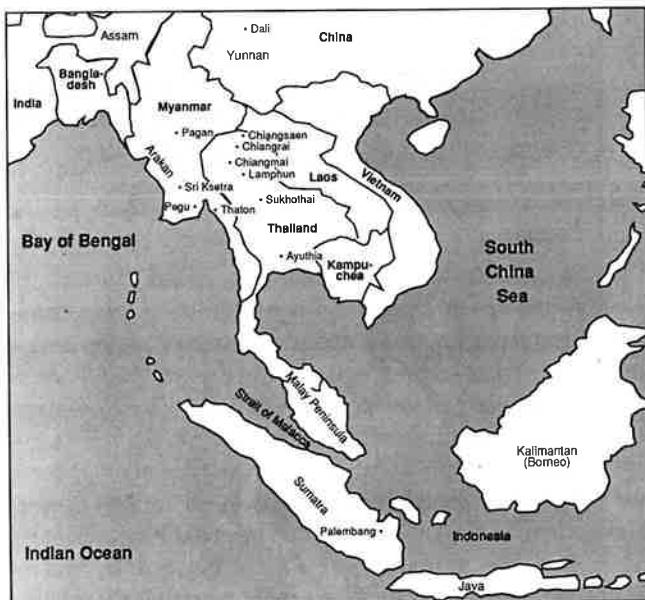


Figure 15. Map of Southeast Asia.

Although Southeast Asia is situated between the cultural regions of India and China and played a vital role in the cross-fertilization of Asian culture, Southeast Asia is not merely a link or transitional region between the two. The special characteristics of Southeast Asia must also be

taken into account when discussing the dynamics of the international contacts of this period. Exhibiting an array of environments, topographies, and natural resources, the mainland and island regions of Southeast Asia are populated by numerous distinct ethnic groups. A dominant theme in the intricate history of the region is the interaction among these peoples. The strength of these indigenous cultures strongly affected the character of Southeast Asia and helped shape the history of the region. The movements of the peoples of Southeast Asia over the centuries inextricably linked the histories of the various regions, a fact that is only imperfectly reflected in the modern national boundaries of Southeast Asia.

The Pāla cultural impact was only a single element in the complex story of Southeast Asian history. In some places, most notably Myanmar and Java, the influence of Pāla culture was strongly felt, and the Pāla-derived artistic styles that flourished in these regions comprise an important chapter in the story of India's cultural influence abroad. However, much of the Pāla influence in Southeast Asia was limited to the elite members of society, where its Sanskritic traditions served largely as a court culture. Because it did not achieve the broad, popular base that it enjoyed in India, Pāla culture may have been doomed to extinction in Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, during the centuries that Pāla influence was felt, Pāla-derived culture underwent a variety of fascinating developments.

## THE ROLE OF SRI LANKA

Separated from the southern tip of India by only a narrow stretch of sea, Sri Lanka was one of the first regions outside of India to feel Buddhist influence. As part of his missionary efforts in the third century B.C., Emperor Aśoka sent Mahinda (who is thought to have been either Aśoka's son or brother) to Sri Lanka, where he converted the Sri Lankan king Devānāpiya Tissa to Buddhism. During King Devānāpiya Tissa's reign, a cutting of the sacred *bodhi* tree at Bodh Gayā was brought to Sri Lanka by a nun named Saṅgamitta, who may have been Aśoka's daughter. The tree, or more probably its descendent, still flourishes as one of the most sacred *paribhogaka* objects in all of Buddhism.

The form of Buddhism practiced in Sri Lanka is based on this very early tradition. Sometimes called Hinayāna or Theravāda Buddhism, neither name is truly accurate or descriptive. Instead, because Sri Lankan Buddhism closely adhered to the texts composed in the Pāli language during the early phases of Buddhism, it is perhaps best simply called the Pāli tradition. Flourishing in Sri Lanka long after it had become virtually extinct in the country of its birth, this form of Buddhism is closely linked with the Buddhists of Sri Lanka, who are known as the



Sinhala. The Sinhala Pāli tradition may be contrasted to the Sanskritic traditions of Mahāyāna and Tantric (Vajrayāna) Buddhism that flourished in much of the Indian subcontinent, including the eastern Gangetic region ruled by the Pālas. During the centuries that many different forms of Buddhism flourished in other regions of Asia, the Sri Lankans continued to favor the Pāli tradition. Differing fundamentally from Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhists in a number of significant respects, followers of the Pāli tradition do not believe in the likelihood of Buddhahood for all. Instead of emphasizing the Bodhisattva as the supreme symbol of potential Buddhahood, Pāli Buddhists emphasize the Arhat as the perfected being to be emulated.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting, however, that some of the kings of Southeast Asia who favored Pāli Buddhism were also conceived as Bodhisattvas of the highest rank.

Although Sri Lankan Buddhists viewed Magadha as the sacred homeland of Buddhism, and Sri Lankan monks regularly visited the region during the Pāla period, Sri Lanka's closest artistic and cultural ties were to southeastern India, undoubtedly as a byproduct of the geographic proximity of the regions. The strength of this affiliation with Sri Lanka may have helped preserve Pāli-based Buddhist traditions in southern India at sites like Kāñcīpuram long after it had died out elsewhere in India. Sri Lankan monks are well known to have journeyed to the sacred Buddhist places in Magadha, and apparently paid special reverence to Bodhi Gayā, but on the whole their culture was most closely affiliated with that of south India, and there is little evidence of Pāla influence on Sri Lankan Buddhism and its art.

Indeed, rather than being influenced by the Pāla world, Sri Lanka was a competitor to the Pāla tradition, for it offered an alternative to the Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism flourishing in the Pāla kingdom. Southeast Asian kings in Myanmar and Thailand in particular came to see the Sri Lankan Buddhism as more "pure" than Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism, and ultimately Sri Lankan Buddhism became highly influential in those regions, where it is still practiced today. In contrast to the Tibetans, for example, who saw the Indic Buddhism flourishing in the Pāla lands as authentic and worthy of faithful emulation, the Myanmaris and the Thais looked to Sri Lanka as the source of the genuine Buddhist tradition and ultimately eradicated the Pāla-based Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism from their kingdoms.

The eclipse of Pāla Buddhism by the Sri Lankan tradition was not merely a matter of rational choice based on preference for certain religious principles. Instead, the circumstances by which Sri Lankan Buddhism came to dominate in Southeast Asia are complexly interwoven with the political and economic motivations of Southeast Asian kings. Because the practice of Buddhism in Southeast Asia was associated with talismanic beliefs, it is likely that

the popularity of one form of the religion over another was tied to the outcome of various secular events and the presumed corresponding efficacy of certain image types, relics, and practices. Further, the Buddhist cultures of Myanmar and Thailand were only entering their periods of florescence around the time that Pāla culture was being extinguished in India. The period of adoption of Sri Lankan Buddhism, from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, took place primarily after the demise of Pāla Buddhism in India. Sri Lanka, with its thriving Buddhist tradition, served as an authoritative source of Buddhist information long after Pāla culture had waned.

#### MYANMAR (BURMA)<sup>4</sup>

Adjacent to Bangladesh on the east, Myanmar (Burma) was the Southeast Asian neighbor nearest to the Pāla region. As might be expected, the two regions were in active contact over the centuries both by overland routes and by sea. Myanmar's coastal region of Arakan in particular is likely to have been part of the greater Bengal cultural sphere from an early date, although the archaeological record of such contacts is not well established.<sup>5</sup> Northern Myanmar, linked with Bengal through Assam, also must have felt the impact of Pāla culture at an early date. It is likely that Mahāyāna and perhaps Tantric Buddhism had spread to northern Myanmar from the Pāla lands during the early Pāla period, for by the time Myanmar history begins to become well documented around the eleventh century, the Mahāyānists, who are associated with the so-called Ari cult of northern Myanmar, were already a powerful force in society.<sup>6</sup>

The reconstruction of the early phase of Pāla influence on Myanmar is hampered by the paucity of surviving monuments and the lack of excavation at sites that might contain evidence of the Pāla connection. In addition, because later Myanmar culture denounced the Mahāyāna and tantric traditions, historical sources, including Myanmar's official chronicles, provide little reliable information about them.

The most visible effect of Pāla culture on Myanmar survives from the Pagan period (1044-1287), the rise and florescence of which coincided with the late Pāla period. During the Pagan period, the kings of Pagan not only dominated virtually all of the Myanmar region, but ranked among the most important kings in Asia. During its heyday, the capital of this powerful kingdom, the city of Pagan, is estimated to have had some three thousand Buddhist monuments. The builders of Pagan's city walls had settled in the Irawaddy River basin by about the ninth century, but the city did not grow in power until the eleventh century under King Aniruddha. Today, Pagan is an archaeological treasure house, with its hundreds of

temples, images, murals, and other artistic works attesting to its former glories. Pāla influence is visible everywhere, from the smallest clay plaques to the grandest architectural structures.

The tenth-century king Caw Rahan, who ruled prior to the rise of Pagan, is important in a discussion of connections between the art of Myanmar and that of the Pāla regions. Caw Rahan is little known, but a thirteenth-century inscription<sup>7</sup> and later historical sources cast him as a heretic, a worshipper of serpents (*nāgas*) and mysterious spirits, and a patron of the Ari Mahāyānists. He is also known to have built a temple dedicated to Viṣṇu.<sup>8</sup> From the disparaging tone of the later textual sources, it is clear that Caw Rahan did not practice the Pāli form of Buddhism that later became popular in Myanmar. Instead, apparently both Mahāyāna and Hinduism were prevalent during his reign. Although the specific religious practices are unknown, it is certain that they were based on those flourishing in the eastern Gangetic regions of Bihar and Bengal, and may have reflected longstanding relations between the regions.

The Pagan period is usually said to have begun with King Aniruddha (ca. 1044-1077), who is legendary for having united most of what is now Myanmar. (For the chronology of the kings of Pagan, see Appendix III, Chart 5.) Aniruddha apparently was also a follower of Mahāyāna, which further suggests the strength and continuity of Pāla culture in Myanmar. It is believed that Aniruddha had religious, cultural, and possibly matrimonial contacts with Bengal; he is even believed to have travelled and "planted magical images" there.<sup>9</sup> Artistic remains from his reign, such as his numerous clay tablets (cat. no. 66), include Mahāyāna subject matter, such as Bodhisattvas, and are closely modeled on Pāla prototypes.<sup>10</sup>

In 1057, Aniruddha invaded the Mon state of Thaton in southern Myanmar. As part of his campaign, he conquered Śrī Kṣetra and removed the relic from Bawbawgyi Stūpa. Taking it back to Pagan with him, he thereby stripped the king of Thaton of its talismanic power. Installing the relic at his own capital, he transferred its power and that of the kings of Thaton to himself. Aniruddha was not the first Buddhist king to seek such sources of power, nor was he the last. Indeed, it became customary in Southeast Asia for kings to attempt to capture the sources of talismanic power of their enemies and thereby to weaken their rivals while increasing their own strength.

After capturing Thaton, he brought its ruler, the defeated King Makuṭa, back to Pagan as well, where the former king spent the remainder of his life. Aniruddha also brought back to Pagan Thaton's Buddhist monks and artists and about thirty thousand of its inhabitants as well. Although later Myanmar historical sources state that the official purpose of this conquest was the king's desire to obtain authentic Pāli Buddhist texts, the Pāli Tripiṭaka,

from Thaton, it is likely that the Mahāyānist Aniruddha's goals were primarily political and that his motivation for capturing Thaton was to gain access to the sea and secure the frontier of his kingdom from external invasion.

Regardless of Aniruddha's motivation, it is likely that the influx of Mon Buddhist culture, which was based on the Pāli Buddhist tradition,<sup>11</sup> altered the course of Pagan's history. The effects may not have been visible immediately. However, a marriage between the daughter of Kyanzittha, one of the later Pagan kings, and the defeated king Makuṭa's grandson eventually secured the Mon position at court. A Mon monk named Shin Arahan was also brought to Pagan by Aniruddha, supposedly for the purpose of having him convert the populace to the Pāli tradition of Buddhism. However, Shin Arahan's importance in that regard and the main thrust toward the Pāli form of Buddhism probably did not occur until the reign of Kyanzittha.

During Aniruddha's reign, events involving Sri Lanka may have paved the way for the eventual domination of Myanmar by Sri Lankan Buddhism. From about 1050, the Sri Lankan prince Kīrti, later called King Vijayabahu I, had been engaged in a struggle against the Cōlas. Under King Rājaraṇa I (reigned 985-1014), the Cōlas had conquered the Sri Lankan kingdom. Shortly before 1067, Vijayabahu I needed funds to pay his troops and sent an urgent appeal to King Aniruddha, who immediately responded with aid. Although Vijayabahu I was able to recover both of his capitals and crush the Cōla invaders, Buddhism had waned during the approximately seventy-five years of Śaivite Cōla domination. Around 1073-1074, Vijayabahu I again turned to Myanmar for help and requested that King Aniruddha supply him with monks who could revive the Buddhist order in Sri Lanka. New copies of the Pāli canon, or Tripiṭaka, were made in Sri Lanka, and some were presented to the Myanmar delegation. The texts may have reached Myanmar during the reign of Aniruddha's successor, King Sawlu, and the impact of these Pāli texts in Pagan was visible almost immediately. The paintings on the walls of the Pahto-thamya Temple, which was probably created during the reign of Sawlu, illustrate the Pāli scriptures (although they are accompanied by Mon glosses).<sup>12</sup>

The apogee of Pagan culture is usually said to have occurred during the reign of King Kyanzittha (ca. 1084-1113). It is likely that a major shift toward the Sri Lankan form of Buddhism took place during his reign, although Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism continued to thrive at Pagan. Kyanzittha had been one of Aniruddha's generals until Aniruddha dismissed Kyanzittha and expelled him from Pagan.<sup>13</sup> When King Sawlu, son and short-lived successor to King Aniruddha, was murdered, Kyanzittha allied himself with the family of the defeated Mon king Makuṭa, whom Aniruddha had imprisoned at Pagan after

his defeat of Thaton. As part of the alliance he made with the former Thaton king, Kyanzittha married his daughter to Makuṭa's grandson and agreed that the son of that union would succeed him as king of Pagan. In this way, Pāli Buddhism and Mon culture were strengthened in Pagan during Kyanzittha's reign, a factor that may dramatically have affected Pagan's future.

Inscriptional evidence indicates that one of Kyanzittha's goals was to "collect and purify the Tripitaka," that is, the Pāli canon, which had become "obscured and corrupt."<sup>14</sup> His efforts were repeated many times by other Southeast Asian kings, for such purifications became characteristic of much of Pāli Buddhism. Kyanzittha's pioneering success in this quest has earned him a respected position in Myanmar history and has been judged by later Myanmar historians to be the principal contribution of his reign. However, the advent of the "pure" texts did not obliterate the Mahāyāna and tantric traditions or the Pāla-based artistic styles at Pagan. Subsequent monarchs continued to "purify" Buddhism, and eventually even the "pure" Pāli Buddhism of Kyanzittha's reign became the "Former Order" and was replaced by a "New Order."

The Kubyaukgyi Temple at Pagan, constructed by Kyanzittha's son Rājakumār around 1113, shortly after the death of Kyanzittha, is a testament to the strength of Pāli Buddhism at that time. The temple, which has been called "an encyclopaedia of human history as known to the Theravadin,"<sup>15</sup> nonetheless bears strong evidence of influence from Pāla culture. The Buddha images in the temple are clearly derived from the Pāla style,<sup>16</sup> and Mahāyāna subjects are included in the iconographic program.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, in spite of the fact that Kyanzittha himself followed the Pāli form of Buddhism and embraced Mon culture, there is evidence everywhere of Pāla artistic and religious influence at Pagan during his reign. His main architectural achievement and perhaps the most impressive temple at Pagan, the Ananda Temple, which he built around 1105, does not have a Mahāyānist iconographic program, but the style of the Buddha images is overwhelmingly based on the Pāla artistic tradition, and particularly that of southern Magadha.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, it is clear that although Kyanzittha and other Pagan kings consciously sought to establish the Pāli tradition of Buddhism, their artistic creations continued to be based on Pāla idioms. The style of some of the images at the Ananda Temple indicates a conflation of Bihar styles and the artistic tradition of Assam (see figs. 3-7, espec. 6),<sup>19</sup> suggesting ongoing artistic interchanges between the Pāla territories and northern Myanmar along the Assam corridor that linked them. Influences from Assam are particularly present in details of the hair styles, the simplicity and schematization of compositional elements, and the treatment of the figures. Thus, it is evident that even when

an iconographic program favored the Pāli tradition over the Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhist traditions, the artists of Pagan followed stylistic patterns that heavily depended on previously established artistic norms derived from northeastern India and Bangladesh.

The ties between the Ananda Temple and the Pāla artistic traditions suggest an ongoing, contemporary knowledge of the Pāla idioms rather than a holdover from an earlier period of contact. Indeed, contact between Myanmar and Pāla India during Kyanzittha's reign is documented by an inscription at the Shwehsandaw Stūpa at Prome in Myanmar, which reveals that Kyanzittha sent a mission to the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā.<sup>20</sup> The mission is believed to have taken place around 1098. According to the inscription, Kyanzittha "got together all sorts of precious things, and sent a ship with the intent to (re)build the Holy *Śrī Bajras* [Vajrāsana]: to buy [land?], dig a reservoir, make irrigated ricefields, make dams, cause candles and lamps to be lit which should never be quenched; and give drums, frog-drums, stringed and percussion instruments, and singing and dancing better than ever before."<sup>21</sup>

Although the main purpose of the expedition to Bodh Gayā was not to bring Pāla culture back to Myanmar, it is likely that some small works of art were brought back as mementos and models. Therefore, the mission to Bodh Gayā probably resulted in a new infusion of Pāla artistic influence at Pagan directly from Bodh Gayā. Indeed, aside from a stylistic relationship that derived from the geographical proximity of Bengal and Myanmar,<sup>22</sup> the art of Pagan shows clear evidence of associations with the stylistic idiom that flourished in southern Magadha, particularly at Bodh Gayā. It is possible that many of the metal images produced at Pagan after this time were directly influenced by southern Magadhan styles (see fig. 16 and cat. no. 63). In particular, the Pagan images relate to a number of metal sculptures that were found at Fatehpur, not far from Bodh Gayā.<sup>23</sup>

In the Shwehsandaw Stūpa inscription, Kyanzittha is compared to Aśoka of the Maurya dynasty (reigned ca. 272-231 B.C.), India's first emperor and the paradigm of Buddhist kingship. Although the purpose of the mission Kyanzittha sent to Bodh Gayā was undoubtedly to make a pious gift to the Mahābodhi Temple, it is also likely that the project reflected Kyanzittha's desire to be associated with the "original" Buddhism, the first great Buddhist king, and the source of Buddhist power, for Bodh Gayā—the only place on earth that could withstand the forces of Māra and the only place where a Buddha could perform the meditations that could lead to enlightenment—was the most powerful place on earth. Significantly, a recurrent theme in the inscriptions of Kyanzittha's reign is a prediction by Śākyamuni Buddha of Kyanzittha's future





Figure 16. Buddha. In shrine near Ananda Okkaung Temple. Pagan, Myanmar. Ca. twelfth century.

Buddhahood.<sup>24</sup> Kyanzittha was thus a Bodhisattva of the highest rank—that is, one whose Buddhahood is not only imminent but had been predicted by Śākyamuni himself. Therefore, the site of the Buddha's own transformation from Bodhisattva to Buddhahood might have had special meaning to Kyanzittha.

That Pāla-related Buddhism was flourishing at Kyanzittha's court is demonstrated nowhere more clearly than at the Abeyadana Temple, which was built by Kyanzittha's chief queen, Abeyadana, around 1090. The iconographic program of the temple is a virtual compendium of Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhist deities executed in an almost purely Pāla style. The iconography of this temple emphasizes Bodhisattvas, who are key figures in Mahāyāna beliefs and iconography, and also includes figures that appear to be tantric divinities and Mahāsiddhas.<sup>25</sup> The imagery and style of the works in this temple clearly show that influences from the Pāla lands must have been current and ongoing rather than a remnant of earlier contacts with the Pāla land. An image of the Buddha-to-be in the earth-touching gesture (fig. 17) is highly reminiscent of eleventh-century images from Bihar, particularly those from southern Magadha. However, the puffy body and downward tilt of the head are characteristic of the Myanmar idiom. A painting of a Bodhisattva from



Figure 17. Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra (Māravijaya). In Abeyadana Temple. Pagan, Myanmar. Ca. 1090.

this temple clearly evidences the Pāla artistic influence (fig. 18) in its stylistic treatment as well as in the manner of ornamenting the figure. Perhaps more rigidly outlined than the forms in Pāla paintings, the overall configuration is nonetheless clearly inspired by a Pāla model.

Relations with Bengal and the Pāla territories apparently continued after Kyanzittha's death. His half-Mon grandson Alaungsithu (reigned ca. 1113-1169/70?), who succeeded him on the throne as part of the matrimonial alliance Kyanzittha had made with King Makuṭa, is supposed to have travelled to Bengal.<sup>26</sup> However, the thrust toward Sri Lankan Buddhism continued, and under King Narapatisithu, who came to the throne in 1173, a new order of Buddhism based on a fresh infusion from Sri Lanka replaced the former type that had been brought from Thaton by Aniruddha and Shin Araham.<sup>27</sup> The so-called New Order was favored by the king, but nonetheless the so-called Former Order remained viable for another two hundred years, until around the time of the fall of Pagan. Due to the missionary zeal of the adherents of the New Order, Buddhism at last became a popular religion in Myanmar, rather than one imposed by the court. Relations with Sri Lanka were maintained, and many monks went there for ordination. From Myanmar, the New Order of Buddhism based on the Sri Lankan types spread to Thailand,





Figure 18. Bodhisattva. Painting in Abeyadana Temple. Pagan, Myanmar. Ca. 1090.

Laos, Kampuchea, and other regions of mainland Southeast Asia, where its effects are still visible today.

Narapatisithu's son Nātoṇmyā succeeded him around 1210. Near the end of Narapatisithu's reign, there was an exodus of Indian Buddhists from the Pāla lands to Myanmar due to the Muslim incursions. The scope and impact of this influx of newcomers is unknown. However, it is interesting that a replica of the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā was built at Pagan during Nātoṇmyā's reign (1210-1234). Also called the Mahābodhi Temple, this structure is so closely modeled on its prototype at Bodh Gayā that it must be assumed that its creators were familiar with the Bodh Gayā temple. It is unlikely that a Myanmar mission would have been sent to Bodh Gayā at the moment in the history of eastern India when the Muslim conquest was at its critical juncture. Therefore, it may be suggested that the creation of the accurate replica of the Mahābodhi Temple at Pagan may have been related to this new infusion of refugees. Perhaps the decision to construct the replica was also related to the fact that access to Bodh Gayā was at that time limited by the political upheavals caused by the Muslim conquest, thereby making it important to create a surrogate.

Because the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā was a product of so many centuries of construction and reconstruction, the form it had achieved during the Pāla

period cannot be called characteristically "Pāla." Indeed, its appearance during the Pāla period may not have been constant, as suggested by the work carried out at the request of Kyanzittha. Thus, the replication of this temple at Pagan does not in itself imply Pāla influence. Nonetheless, in replicating the temple it is likely that Pāla features were copied in order to accurately duplicate the monument and that images created in the Pāla period were models for ones created at Pagan.

The most important thirteenth-century event in the history of Pagan was its fall to the Mongols around 1287, after more than a decade of struggle. Various reasons have been given for Pagan's fall, and scholars have postulated internal reasons as well as the external Mongol threat. The last Pagan king, Narathihapade (reigned 1254-1287), has been cast as a brutal despot devoid of religious piety. His tactical errors, including his abandonment of his capital when he feared that Pagan was about to be attacked by the Mongols, must certainly have facilitated the fall of Pagan, but whether he or any other king could have prevented the Mongols from their conquest is uncertain. His construction of the grandiose Mingalazedi Stūpa may have contributed to the ruin of Pagan's economy, which may have already been strained due to the ambitious building programs of earlier kings.<sup>28</sup> Although the Mongols administered the final blow, the seeds of destruction may already have been sown.

Following the 1287 defeat, Pagan became a provincial capital of the Mongols, with Prince Kyawzwa of the former royal line of Pagan installed as a vassal. Around 1299 or 1300, Kyawzwa was murdered and Pagan was burned. When the central authority of Pagan disintegrated, those formerly under Pagan's rulership, such as northern Arakan, the Mons, and the Shans, asserted their independence. Ultimately it was the Shans who were able to repulse the Mongol usurpers around 1303.

In light of the history of Pagan during the last few decades of the thirteenth century, two Myanmar inscriptions found at Bodh Gayā are intriguing. One is a brief dedicatory inscription on a gilded copper umbrella that bears a date equivalent to A.D. 1293-94; the other, on a stone slab, records a rebuilding of the Mahābodhi Temple by a Myanmar king from 1295 to 1298.<sup>29</sup> Since the nineteenth century, the inscriptions have been thought to record Myanmar activity at Bodh Gayā during the eleventh century, for the umbrella epigraph was read as corresponding to A.D. 1035, while the dates of the stone inscription were read as corresponding to A.D. 1079 to 1086.<sup>30</sup>

Taken with the Shwehsandaw Stūpa inscription recording Kyanzittha's mission to Bodh Gayā in the eleventh century, the two incorrectly read inscriptions seemed to corroborate that the Mahābodhi Temple had fallen into a state of great disrepair during the eleventh

The clearest surviving associations with the Pāla idiom are seen in an image type that became overwhelmingly popular in northern Thailand during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The image type is always a depiction of the so-called Vajrāsana Buddha, or Māravijaya scene, one of the most popular image types of the Pāla period. In these representations, the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni is shown seated, with his legs in the lotus position (*padmāsana* or *vajraparyāṅkāsa*) and his right hand in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) (cat. no. 69). Invariably made of metal, the images are usually quite large compared with surviving Pāla metal images. Generally between two and three feet in height, these images compare more with Pāla stone images in terms of their size.

In spite of their obvious iconographic resemblance to the popular Māravijaya image type in Pāla art, the Thai images are unlike their Pāla counterparts in a number of ways. By comparison with Pāla images of the Māravijaya, which almost invariably are elaborated with complex lotus pedestals, thrones, halos, and other elements surrounding the central figure, the northern Thai examples generally consist of an isolated figure or a figure on a lotus pedestal. Unadorned by the usual Pāla embellishments, the images are striking in their simplicity. In style, the figures are many steps away from any Pāla originals and show features that clearly derive from an already longstanding artistic tradition in Thailand.

When modern scholars first attempted to place these images in the developmental sequence of the art of Thailand, they assumed that the images had been produced soon after the Pāla period itself. Therefore, the images were dated to around the fourteenth century and were believed to derive from the presumed influence from Pagan, specifically King Mengrai's importation of artists. However, based on a study of a series of inscribed dated images ranging in date from 1470 to 1565, Alexander Griswold has presented a powerful argument that most, if not all, of the images of this type were made around the late fifteenth or first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>36</sup> Rather than seeing the image type as a culmination of the Pāla-Myanmar continuum of influence, Griswold suggested that it was introduced to northern Thailand by a fifteenth-century king, Tiloka, who is renowned for having built a replica of the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā at Chiangmai around 1455-1470.<sup>37</sup> King Tiloka may have sent a mission to Bodh Gayā to study the Mahābodhi Temple to insure the accuracy of the replica he was building at Chiangmai, and on that basis Griswold suggested that King Tiloka's image type was specifically modeled after the main image of the Buddha-to-be in the Mahābodhi Temple.

Griswold thus explained what he perceived to be a gap between the presumed introduction of Pāla-derived

styles from Pagan in the late thirteenth century and the appearance of these images (for additional discussion, see cat. no. 69). During the fourteenth century, major image types derived from the Sri Lankan tradition had been introduced into northern Thailand during the reign of King Kuna (1355-1385), accompanied by a major movement toward the Sri Lankan tradition.<sup>38</sup> Thus it seemed possible that there had been a break in the continuity between a Pagan-influenced style and King Tiloka's Pāla-based image. Griswold further theorized that under King Tiloka's father, King Sam Fang Kaen, who came to the throne in 1401, it is unlikely that much artistic activity took place, since he is said to have repudiated the doctrine and favored the heretics.

Although the issue of whether images of the type were produced during the fourteenth century has not yet been settled, it is undeniable that around the time of Tiloka's reign, the Māravijaya image enjoyed a new and enduring popularity. There is little doubt that the main image Tiloka installed in his replica of the Mahābodhi Temple would have been a replica of that in the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā. The many others produced in northern Thailand must have in turn been based on this model. Alexander Griswold has explained that in Thailand, through the creation of an image, a patron "hopes to produce a miraculous device. In order to inherit some fraction of the infinite power the Buddha himself possessed, an image *must* trace its lineage back to one of the legendary 'authentic' likenesses. . . . The safe course is to choose one [a model] that has proved itself by displaying unusual magic power. Since by that very fact it will have already become illustrious there is every reason to copy a famous model, none at all to copy an obscure one."<sup>39</sup> A replica of the main image at the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā would have been considered by King Tiloka to contain such power. He further empowered himself and his kingdom by planting a sapling from the descendent of the *bodhi* tree that he had obtained from Sri Lanka as part of the dedication of his replica of the Mahābodhi Temple.<sup>40</sup>

The relationship between empowering images and kingship in Thailand has been shown to be inextricably linked with the process of royal legitimation.<sup>41</sup> The adoption of the Māravijaya image that was so favored during Pāla times and is likely to have represented a symbol of authority for the Pāla kings does not signify a shift in basic religious practices in northern Thailand, which was still heavily influenced by Sri Lanka. Instead, King Tiloka's adoption of an image type based on the main image at Bodh Gayā was similar to the Myanmar king Aniruddha's capture of the relics of Thaton in that it probably reflected the king's quest for authority. Therefore, the appearance of the Māravijaya image type in northern Thailand during King Tiloka's reign does not represent the advent of a wave of Pāla cultural influence. Nonetheless, the model for King

Tiloka's image was indeed Pāla, and by introducing its replicas into the artistic tradition of northern Thailand, King Tiloka inadvertently revived the Pāla artistic tradition.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps inspired by the copy of the Mahābodhi Temple built at Chiangmai by King Tiloka, another king of northern Thailand constructed a replica at Chiangrai, perhaps some time before 1500.<sup>43</sup> The Chiangrai temple, which like Tiloka's temple is called Wat Chedi Chet Yot, was heavily restored in the nineteenth century, so its original features are difficult to reconstruct. It apparently was modeled on the Chiangmai temple. The reasons for the creation of this second temple and its relationships with the Pāla tradition are unknown.

In addition to the evidence of Pāla influence in peninsular Thailand and in the north, there are a few stray documents that must be considered when evaluating the role of Pāla art in the development of the art of Thailand. Most famous of these are two small Pāla period stone sculptures. The first is a typical Bihari depiction of the Buddha taming the elephant Nālāgiri.<sup>44</sup> The image is called Phra Sila (Stone Buddha) and is in worship at Wat Chiang Man in Chiangmai. It is mentioned in a chronicle devoted to the history of the image that is dated A.D. 1785,<sup>45</sup> but the date the image was brought to Thailand is unknown. The pedigree given to the image is impeccable, for the chronicle states that it was made at the order of King Ajātaśatru of Magadha and that it was made shortly after the death of the Buddha and even contained his relics.<sup>46</sup> Later, it was supposedly taken to Sri Lanka, then to Myanmar, and finally to Thailand, where it came to Chiangmai after it had been in Lampāng for some time. The image is now revered for its rainmaking powers.

The historical information provided by the chronicle is clearly unreliable, for the image could not have been made around the time the Buddha lived; instead, it was undoubtedly made in a Pāla workshop in Magadha around the tenth century. The process by which the image is said to have reached Thailand, that is, through Sri Lanka, suggests an attempt to legitimize the image according to the Pāli forms of Buddhism. Artistically, the piece is like the proverbial fish out of water in Thailand, for the style is unlike anything characteristic of the Thai tradition; the subject, while known in the art of Thailand, is not particularly prevalent. Even if it arrived in Thailand at an early date, for example, shortly after the Pāla period, it does not appear to have had any influence on the art of northern Thailand at all. Because the subject of the piece, the taming of Nālāgiri, does not constitute one of the principal iconographic themes of either Thai or Pāla art, it may be suggested that it reached Thailand as a stray example and does not reflect the importation of Pāla objects as sources for artistic inspiration.

A second Pāla stone sculpture was discovered at Ayuthia, rather than in northern Thailand, but also must be considered when discussing the possibility of Pāla influence in Thailand. This image, a small stone plaque showing the eight Buddha life scenes with the Māravijaya scene in the center, is likely to have been produced at Nālandā around the tenth or eleventh century.<sup>47</sup> This tiny image was found at Ayuthia in the royal reliquary chamber of Wat Ratchaburana, where the cremated remains of two princes, sons of King Intharatcha (reigned 1409-1424), had been enshrined. It was found among other burial goods, including jewelry, weapons, votive tablets, and other Buddhist images. It had been gilded in the manner prevalent in Thailand, suggesting that it had been dedicated in some manner after its arrival in Thailand. The history of the image during the four or five hundred years between the time it was created and its burial at Ayuthia is unknown. It may have been transported to Thailand at an early date, perhaps even during the Pāla period, but it is just as likely that it eventually reached Thailand through a more circuitous route, perhaps through Myanmar, at a later date. In either case, like the image enshrined at Chiangmai, this image does not appear to have had any artistic impact on the art of Thailand. Although the subject of the Māravijaya does become important in Thailand, this particular configuration, in which additional life scenes surround the central figure, does not. Like the Pāla images found in peninsular Thailand, the presence of these two images in Thailand does not seem to document artistic influence but probably represents the complexities of historical and religious interactions between various regions of Asia.

A survey of the art of Thailand demonstrates that the Pāla artistic tradition did not strongly flavor the art of the region. The rich panoply of iconographic forms characteristic of Pāla Buddhist art, such as Bodhisattvas, Jina Buddhas, female divinities, worshippers, *vidyādhara*s, and other minor figures, are noticeably absent in the art of Thailand. Emphasizing the Pāli Buddhist tradition and Sri Lanka as the source for their Buddhist knowledge, the artists and patrons of Thailand favored images of Śākyamuni Buddha in a variety of forms. Although Pāla India's premier Buddhist image type, the Māravijaya, was widely adopted in northern Thailand based on a Pāla model, it was quoted from the Pāla context without the Pāla accoutrements and embellishments. Emphasizing the figure of the Buddha himself, the artists of Thailand used their talents to achieve technical perfection and imbue their works with subtleties of detail and surface treatment. This emphasis on the Buddha alone and the replication of his images has led to what Alexander Griswold has called their multiplication "beyond computation"<sup>48</sup> in the art of Thailand.

In contrast to Myanmar, where Pāla influence was felt strongly in every medium of art and architecture, Indonesia displays Pāla influence mainly in the medium of metal sculpture. As far as can be determined, most of the surviving metal images were products of workshops on the island of Java, although some also may have been created elsewhere, such as Sumatra (see fig. 15). The main period of florescence occurred approximately contemporaneously with the early Pāla period, around the eighth through the tenth or eleventh centuries, during what are usually called the Central and Eastern Javanese periods. Some Pāla-related images also date from the twelfth century, but these are fewer in number and suggest that Javanese contact with the Pāla world had waned by that time.

It is curious that the stylistic impact of Pāla art is visible primarily in a single medium, for at the same time that these strongly Pāla-influenced metal images were being produced, the kings of Java were commissioning extraordinary architectural monuments richly embellished with exquisite stone carvings in a different style. Instead of resembling works of the Pāla artistic tradition, these structures and their decoration probably ultimately derived from Gupta period sources, enriched by associations with other Indic styles. In addition, the temple and stone sculpture traditions of Java were already marked by a distinctive local character that testifies to the existence of strongly developed indigenous ateliers. Examples of Central and Eastern Javanese period painting have not been identified, and therefore it is unknown whether the Javanese painting tradition was related to the Pāla idiom.

The strength of the Pāla impact may be seen in the stunning corpus of surviving Javanese metal images. Displaying extraordinary iconographic richness, stylistic sophistication, and technical virtuosity, Javanese metal images are often exquisitely rendered with jewellike precision. Most of the surviving images are fairly small; like Pāla metal images, the majority are under twelve inches in height, though a few are larger (cat. no. 72), and many are tiny miniatures (cat. no. 81). None on the scale of the pre-Pāla period over life-size standing Buddha image from Sultāngaṅj has been found.<sup>49</sup> Like their Pāla counterparts, the majority are made of copper alloys, although quite a few in silver have been preserved (cat. nos. 81 and 85) and a few precious survivals in gold (cat. no. 82) are also known. As in the Pāla tradition, many of the images must have been parts of groups, as eloquently illustrated by the famous sculptural *maṇḍala* that was found at Nganjuk (cat. no. 83).

It is likely that the inspiration for the Javanese metal images was derived specifically from the Pāla metal tradition, for in general the Javanese images have little in

common with Pāla stone sculptures. This suggests that one means of transfer of the style was through the importation into Java of metal images that might then have served as inspiration for others of the same medium. One Pāla image in this exhibition (cat. no. 45), is likely to have come to Java in this way.

Unlike architectural monuments, which can often be associated with specific kings in Java, the known metal images have been disassociated from their historical contexts. Examples of Javanese metal images bearing dates are unknown, and therefore only a relative dating sequence can be established for the images; they are generally dated on a stylistic basis based in part on parallel developments in Pāla art. The styles of the Central and Eastern Javanese periods are distinctive, and thus the images fall into two general groups, Central Javanese (ca. eighth and ninth centuries) and Eastern Javanese (ca. tenth and eleventh centuries), with some transition between the two (see Appendix III, Charts 6 and 7).<sup>50</sup>

During the Central Javanese period, two dynasties predominated (see Appendix III, Chart 6),<sup>51</sup> the Buddhist Śāilendra (Lords of the Mountains) dynasty (ca. early seventh century to 856)<sup>52</sup> and the Śaivite Sañjaya dynasty (ca. 732-?).<sup>53</sup> Until about 824, the relationship between the Sañjayas and the Śāilendras appears to have been peaceful, although the Śāilendras were apparently more powerful.<sup>54</sup> However, around 832 the Sañjaya king proclaimed his authority over most of Central Java.<sup>55</sup> The Śāilendra king had apparently died in that year, and his infant son Bālaputra was too young to assume father's throne. The deceased king's daughter was subsequently married to the son of the Sañjaya king, thereby uniting the two kingdoms.<sup>56</sup> The effect on art of this political merger around the mid-ninth century is not clear.<sup>57</sup>

As an adult, Bālaputra made an attempt to regain his father's kingdom. However, he was unsuccessful and left Java for Sumatra, where he ultimately became king of the Śrīvijaya empire, presumably after having married a Śrīvijaya princess.<sup>58</sup> The date of Bālaputradeva's departure from Java is unknown, but by 856 it is believed that all Śāilendra claims to the throne had been extinguished.<sup>59</sup>

It is likely that Bālaputra had left Java a few years earlier, for by about 851 he was already king of Śrīvijaya, as may be inferred from an inscription on a copperplate grant found at Nālandā monastery in the Pāla lands. This inscription records a grant of the revenues from five villages for the comfort of the monks and for the upkeep of a monastery at Nālandā by King Bālaputradeva of Suvarṇadvīpa, whose his father and grandfather are identified as Śāilendra kings of Java.<sup>60</sup> The inscription is dated in the thirty-ninth regnal year of King Devapāla (ca. 851), who sanctioned the gift. Since Bālaputra is called a king in that inscription, it is apparent that he had left Java even before 851. The term Suvarṇadvīpa is well known



from Sanskrit sources to refer to Sumatra.<sup>61</sup> It is possible that Bālaputra's mission to Pāla India and his donation at Nālandā may have been partly due to an effort to cultivate an alliance between his own country and that of one of the most powerful Buddhist kingdoms in Asia. But his donation may also have reflected his desire to institute Buddhist ties in the homeland of Buddhism on behalf of his newly adopted Śrīvijayan kingdom and thereby help establish his newly emerging power and authority. Like kings of Myanmar and Thailand, he may have been seeking legitimation of his Buddhist kingship by making a donation to one of the most important seats of Buddhist influence.

Bālaputra's choice of Nālandā as the recipient of his gift was probably not random or unprecedented. Javanese metal images of the Śailendra period, that is, the eighth and ninth centuries, prior to Bālaputra's departure for Sumatra, already show close affiliation with metal images from Nālandā, and Bālaputra's gift to Nālandā probably reflected an already established relationship between his family and this renowned Buddhist institution. Further, since the vast majority of metal images from Indonesia have been found on Java, not Sumatra, it must be assumed that Javanese ties to Nālandā were strong prior to his departure and continued to be so even after he left.

It is notable that Bālaputra's associations were to Nālandā rather than Bodhi Gayā or another site sacred to the historical Buddha, for Nālandā did not have historical ties to Śākyamuni Buddha. However, Nālandā was one of the most illustrious institutions of its day and was home to some of the greatest Buddhist thinkers of the Pāla age. While the details of the association with Nālandā are unknown, the relationship is evident both in the style of a great number of metal images produced in Indonesia and in their iconography, which emphasizes the progressive type of Buddhism practiced at Nālandā.

The relationships between the Nālandā and Indonesian (mainly Javanese) metal image traditions are undeniable. In some cases, it is the configuration of an image, although not necessarily the stylistic details, that recalls works from Nālandā (cat. no. 72). In other cases, the Nālandā model is so apparent that it is difficult to judge whether a work is in fact from India or Indonesia (cat. no. 73).

In spite of the fact that both inscriptional and artistic ties verify that Nālandā was an important source of artistic information for the Javanese, Nālandā was not the exclusive Pāla source for Indonesian metal imagery, for other schools of Pāla art also had a profound impact on the art of Indonesia. This fact has become more apparent as recent studies of Pāla art have defined the various subschools of the Pāla idiom itself. The most obvious source for Javanese metal images, aside from Nālandā, is the eastern Bengal region, where a metal image tradition was founded at least as early as that at Nālandā and which developed its own

distinctive characteristics at an early date. Although the influence of eastern Bengal may have arisen by direct associations, inscriptional evidence, such as Bālaputra's grant to Nālandā, has not been discovered to substantiate it.

It is possible that the associations with Bengal arose naturally as a byproduct of Indonesian interactions with the Pāla lands. Ships from the islands of Indonesia are likely to have travelled to ports in Bengal, and passengers on such ships, such as those destined for Nālandā, would have had to travel through Bengal to reach Bihar. Thus, the Bengal region is likely to have played a crucial role in the interactions between the Pāla world and Indonesia. An eighth-century image from Java shows unmistakable affiliations to the eastern Bengal tradition (cat. no. 70). The slender figure type, with the narrow breasts, full hips, and broad shoulders, typifies the style found in images of about the eighth century in Bengal even prior to the ascendancy of the Pāla dynasty.<sup>62</sup> Features appearing in Indonesian metal images that seem to be derived specifically from a Bengali source include a high pedestal, often with a cloth hanging from the seat (cat. no. 76), and a rectangular back used behind standing figures (cat. no. 77). The practice of creating compositions in which deities of similar size appear together may also be based on a Bengali model (compare cat. no. 46 from Bengal and cat. no. 84 from Java).

In spite of the distinctive ties between Javanese and Pāla metal images, the Javanese artists for the most part did not copy Pāla artistic styles precisely. Even from the earliest examples, Javanese works often include elements not found in Pāla art, suggesting the existence of an already established artistic tradition and the possibility of influences from other artistic idioms. An examination of the backs of many of the Javanese metal images and some of the technical means by which forms are achieved also reveals a departure from Pāla artistic norms. For example, the backs of Javanese metal images often consist of a single, flat surface from the base to the top of the halo. In contrast, most Pāla metal images consist of distinct elements that are even visible on the back, including the pedestal, figure, and halo. Further, while Pāla artists hand-modeled the wax forms used as a basis for the metal casting, Javanese artists often used tools to create various elements, including an angular, hard edge to the halo (cat. no. 86) or the detailing of lotus petals (cat. no. 78). Another distinctively Javanese characteristic is the use of a bent-axis for the pole that holds the umbrella above the central figure (cat. no. 86), which contrasts to the invariably straight pole seen in Pāla works.

In addition to the unmistakable stylistic and technical debt of Javanese metal images to Pāla works, there is a strong iconographic association. Interestingly, the Javanese idiom appears to be the only Pāla-dependent tradition that did not emphasize Śākyamuni Buddha, the events of his life, or the places where they occurred. Thus,

representations of the Buddha-to-be overcoming Māra and other of the eight major Buddha life events are difficult to trace in the art of Java. It may be suggested that the Javanese interest in the Pāla regions was not based on the fact that this region incorporated many of the most important *paribhogaka* places in the Buddhist world. Rather, the Javanese emphasized the forms of Buddhism that were being practiced at sites like Nālandā, in which Mahāvairocana (cat. nos. 82 and 84), the Jina Buddhas (cat. no. 78), various Bodhisattvas (cat. nos. 73, 81, and 86), Tārā, Prajñāpāramitā, and other Mahāyāna and tantric divinities predominated (cat. no. 87). Most important of these deities was Mahāvairocana, the Buddha in whom the totality of the universe is personified and who resides at the center of the Buddhist universe. Keeping apace with the most advanced religious developments of Pāla Buddhism, the Javanese Buddhists apparently were in constant contact with the Pāla kingdom or other Buddhist strongholds, such as Śrīvijaya, that were renowned as centers of contemporary esoteric Buddhist practices.

Both Buddhism and Hinduism had penetrated Java at an early date, and by the time the Pālas had risen to power in Bihar and Bengal, both religious traditions were not only already well established in Java, but were flourishing side-by-side. Although there are fewer Hindu than Buddhist images, a number of Hindu examples are known, many of which may have been produced under the aegis of the Hindu Sañjaya dynasty of Central Java. Images of Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed god, seem to have been especially popular in Java (cat. no. 76), along with depictions of Śiva (cat. no. 77), Viṣṇu, and other gods. The mechanism by which the Javanese patrons of Hindu art maintained contact with the Pāla sources are unknown; it is possible that they did not have extensive ties with Pāla Hinduism, but rather that the Pāla-related Hindu art styles developed as a byproduct of the intense interaction between Buddhists of Java and the Pāla kingdom.

The introduction of Buddhist and Hindu religious practices in Indonesia was not the result of a broad-based, popular movement. Instead, as was true for centuries in mainland Southeast Asia, Indic culture was mainly of concern to the elite. At the head of the complex feudal organization of Javanese society was the king. As is clear from Javanese inscriptions, at times more than one king ruled different portions of the island, resulting in rivalry among competing kings. Like kings of mainland Southeast Asia, Javanese rulers sought to legitimize their authority and increase their power through religious practices and ceremonies, a major element of which included the erection and administration of temples. Although the model of Sanskrit Indic kingship was grafted onto the hierarchical Javanese system, an indigenous cult involving the veneration of deceased ancestral chieftains imbued Javanese culture with its distinctive character. Kings came

to be considered incarnations of Indian deities, and monuments were erected that simultaneously honored a deceased king and a divinity.<sup>63</sup>

In this context, the production of metal images inspired by Pāla models may be assumed to have had important symbolic and ceremonial functions. In Javanese Buddhism, the emphasis on Mahāvairocana was probably inextricably associated with notions of kingship, for Mahāvairocana—the supreme Mahāyāna divinity and the center of the Buddhist universe—would have been a fitting model for the Javanese Buddhist king presiding over his domains. Like Mahāvairocana, the Javanese Buddhist king dwelled at the heart of his kingdom, surrounded by the princes, guardians, and subjects of his realm. One can only wonder if the famous sculpted *maṇḍala* found at Nganjuk (cat. no. 83), with Mahāvairocana at its center, was intended as a model of the kingdom of the monarch who reigned at the time it was made.

### THE PROBLEM OF ŚRĪVIJAYA

The great mercantile empire of Śrīvijaya remains one of the most enigmatic yet fascinating subjects of Southeast Asian history (see Appendix III, Chart 8). The capital of Śrīvijaya for much of the period of its supremacy was Palembang on Sumatra. Holding political and cultural sway over Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and the Malay Peninsula (fig. 19), the kings of Śrīvijaya controlled some of the most lucrative maritime routes of Asia, linking China, Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, and eastern Africa.<sup>64</sup> Although

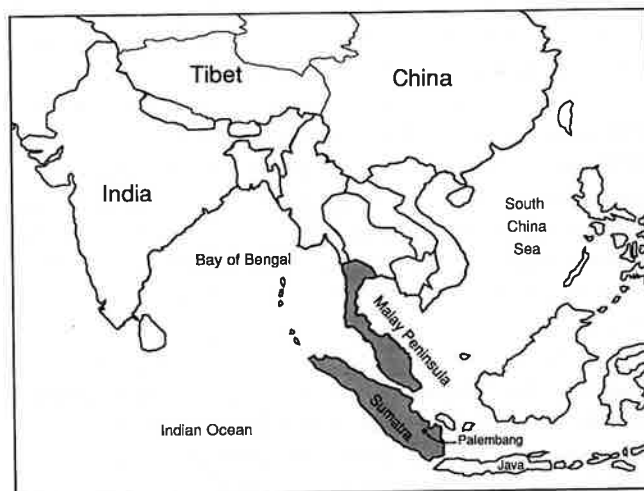


Figure 19. Map showing probable extent of Śrīvijaya empire.

the empire is known as early as the seventh century,<sup>65</sup> its period of greatest power was from the eighth through the thirteenth centuries. Major commodities in this intercontinental trade included Chinese ceramics, which

were highly prized by the Persians; Persian luxury goods, which were eagerly sought by the Chinese; and products from India and Southeast Asia, such as spices, silks, aromatic woods, and even elephants.

Because of the flourishing trade within their kingdom and the handsome duties they collected from those who traversed their waters, the kings of Śrīvijaya became immensely wealthy. Their lavish patronage of Buddhist monasteries is well known from historical sources, and their capital became a center of Buddhist scholarship that was famous throughout the Buddhist world. Chinese travellers enroute to India for pilgrimage and study often stopped there; some spent years at the flourishing monasteries. After having visited Śrīvijaya, Yijing (I-tsing), a seventh-century Chinese traveller, recommended that all pilgrims from China spend a year or two there before proceeding to India.<sup>66</sup> Atīśa, a famous Bengali *paṇḍita* whose teachings were of profound importance to Tibetan Buddhism, spent twelve years in Śrīvijaya, from around 1013 to 1025. There he studied with the *ācārya* Dharmakīrti, whose erudition was known throughout the Buddhist world.<sup>67</sup> Atīśa is believed to have acquired his great knowledge of Mahāyāna under Dharmakīrti's tutelage.<sup>68</sup>

Although a great deal is known about Śrīvijaya from historical and epigraphic sources, virtually nothing is known about its artistic traditions. Scholars have long puzzled over the lack of correspondence between the historical information and the archaeological record, for it is certain that the kingdom's prosperity would have fostered generous patronage of religious establishments not only by the royal family but also by the laity. It has been hypothesized that the Śrīvijayans were more concerned with commercial ventures than artistic ones,<sup>69</sup> but from the viewpoint of a Śrīvijayan ruler or citizen, it is unlikely that the acquisition of wealth would have been seen as a secular activity divorced from the efficacy of religious practices. Instead, the material well-being of Śrīvijaya is likely to have reinforced religious intensity, for the wealth would have been viewed as proof of the effectiveness of the religion.<sup>70</sup>

The absence of evidence of major architectural and artistic achievements in Sumatra is especially puzzling in light of the legacy of extraordinary artistic accomplishments of the Śailendras in Java. One need only think of Barabudūr, a Śailendra production that is rightfully considered to be one of the most impressive architectural monuments in the world. Thus, although the histories of the Śailendras in Java and the kings of Śrīvijaya are inextricably linked through Bālaputra, prince of the Śailendras and subsequently king of Śrīvijaya, it is difficult to trace the Śailendra legacy in Sumatra. If indeed Bālaputra and his successors in Sumatra built monuments based on the Śailendra tradition, apparently none were comparably

enduring. Major Śrīvijayan architectural achievements also have not been found elsewhere in the Śrīvijayan empire, such as the Malay Peninsula.

However, historical records document construction of religious buildings by Śrīvijayans. For example, although not built within his kingdom, King Bālaputra's gift to Nālandā signifies that the king patronized Buddhist establishments and suggests that he is likely to have made gifts at home as well. A later Śrīvijayan king, Māravijayottuṅavarman, is known to have patronized the construction of two monuments. In his struggle against the Eastern Javanese king Dharmavaṃśa, who was hoping to destroy Śrīvijaya and gain its lucrative trade routes, Māravijayottuṅavarman sought help from both the Chinese and the south Indian Cōḷas. As a gesture of gratitude after he was successful in defeating his enemy, the Śrīvijayan king erected a Buddhist temple, presumably in Śrīvijaya, for the purpose of offering prayers for the life of the Chinese emperor. About two years later, the Śrīvijayan king constructed a monastery at Nāgapattinam in south India, to which the Cōḷa king Rājaraḷa I granted revenues of a large village for its upkeep.<sup>71</sup> This gift, which paralleled that of his forebear Bālaputra at Nālandā, was intended to provide a place for Śrīvijayan merchants to practice their religion while abroad. Although King Māravijayottuṅavarman's monastery was built in India, not in his own kingdom, its construction suggests that he was an active builder and might similarly have patronized religious establishments in his own country as well.

One very likely reason for the lack of surviving Śrīvijayan monuments is that the architects and artists may have used perishable materials, such as wood, in the creation of their works, rather than more durable materials like stone. Thus, the buildings and images they fabricated would have deteriorated over the centuries and ultimately vanished. It should be recalled that virtually no architecture survives from the Pāla period, when brick and presumably wood were the most important construction materials. Some Śrīvijayan monuments might purposely have been destroyed during political upheavals or periods of great social change. Further, it is likely that the most important archaeological sites have not yet been identified and excavated.<sup>72</sup>

Nonetheless, most works of art found in regions known to have been under Śrīvijayan control during the period of Śrīvijayan hegemony are identified as "Śrīvijayan." Many of the works of art that are labelled Śrīvijayan were probably produced in other regions of Asia rather than in Śrīvijaya itself. Their presence in Śrīvijaya is likely to reflect the cosmopolitan culture of the Śrīvijayan empire rather than the existence of active ateliers. The works of art that are generally labelled "Śrīvijayan" present a melange of artistic styles and include both Hindu and Buddhist materials. Visible in the works attributed to

Śrīvijaya are elements of the southern Indian Pallava idiom, which probably influenced portions of Southeast Asia around the seventh century; characteristics of the Pāla tradition of Bihar and Bengal; and features showing strong affiliation to the well known Pāla-based metal images of Java, to name just the most prominent.

The geographical and chronological framework presently used to define Śrīvijayan art tells us little about any possible centers of Śrīvijayan artistic production, its phases, or its styles. Considering the variety of influences that must have come to bear on the Śrīvijayan empire due to its position at the center of the international arena, it is unlikely that Śrīvijayan art was homogeneous in style. Instead, the art of Śrīvijaya must have represented a synthesis of other styles with its own artistic predilections and contributions. It is certain that Pāla influence would have been a major ingredient in some aspects of Śrīvijayan art, whether derived directly from the Pāla kingdom or indirectly through secondary sources, such as Java.

Whether or not the art of Śrīvijaya will ever be known to have matched the illustriousness of its kings and religious institutions, the maritime empire of Śrīvijaya played a crucial role in the cross-pollination of Asian culture during a period of intense international activity. Carried along on the many ships that traversed the seas were the instruments of the spread of Pāla culture—the intrepid pilgrims, monks, and merchants and the treasures they brought with them.

#### SOUTHWESTERN CHINA: THE YUNNAN REGION

Although the Yunnan region is presently in the country of China (fig. 20), its history is inextricably linked with that of the Southeast Asian world. Indeed, the local populace is not Chinese, but rather is believed to be related to the ethnic groups found in Thailand and other regions of Southeast Asia. First under the Nanzhao kings and later under the Dali (see Appendix III, Charts 9 and 10), the region became politically important and powerful from the seventh through the mid-thirteenth centuries, until the Mongol armies conquered Yunnan in 1253.<sup>73</sup> The economy prospered through overland trade, and Dali effectively controlled the trade routes along the Mekong and Salween river gorges.

As far as is known, Pāla artistic influence in Yunnan appears only in a single image type, a representation of Avalokiteśvara that served as a talisman to the Dali kings and which was duplicated numerous times by them (for discussion, see cat. no. 88). The original iconographic source for the image type may have been brought to Yunnan from India as early as the seventh century, although the surviving images are apparently all later in date. In style, the images reveal not only the imprint of Pāla art, but



Figure 20. Map of Asia highlighting Yunnan.

traces of the Pallava art of southern India and Southeast Asian styles as well. This stylistic complexity is not surprising in light of Yunnan's geographic situation and reflects the complicated path by which the Indian style reached Yunnan.<sup>74</sup>

The Yunnanese practice of using a talismanic image type strongly relates to concepts of royal empowerment prevalent in Southeast Asia.<sup>75</sup> Although the origins of this practice are unknown, it is likely to have developed very early in the Buddhist tradition. However, the emphasis on talismanic properties appears to have become more pronounced after Buddhism left its homeland. In foreign lands, Buddhism generally was initially a religion of the elite members of society rather than the general populace, and the concept of the talisman became inextricably related to concepts of kingship and the legitimation of kings. While Buddhist relics could never be replicated, but could only be stolen and restolen, images based on an authentic model could be copied and recopied, thus providing their makers with the possibility of infinite sources of power.

#### OTHER REGIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Although Pāla influence may be traced in other areas of Southeast Asia not covered in this survey, it is for the most part manifested in minor details and specific motifs in the art. The influence in some regions of Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam and Kampuchea, probably occurred indirectly, rather than through ongoing or extensive contacts with the Pāla world. For example, even though the art of Kampuchea displays tantric iconography that is ultimately traceable to a Pāla source, it is likely that the influence spread through the intermediary of the Indonesian kingdoms of Java and Sumatra. Certain elements in the art, such as crown types,



Śrīvijaya are elements of the southern Indian Pallava idiom, which probably influenced portions of Southeast Asia around the seventh century; characteristics of the Pāla tradition of Bihar and Bengal; and features showing strong affiliation to the well known Pāla-based metal images of Java, to name just the most prominent.

The geographical and chronological framework presently used to define Śrīvijayan art tells us little about any possible centers of Śrīvijayan artistic production, its phases, or its styles. Considering the variety of influences that must have come to bear on the Śrīvijayan empire due to its position at the center of the international arena, it is unlikely that Śrīvijayan art was homogeneous in style. Instead, the art of Śrīvijaya must have represented a synthesis of other styles with its own artistic predilections and contributions. It is certain that Pāla influence would have been a major ingredient in some aspects of Śrīvijayan art, whether derived directly from the Pāla kingdom or indirectly through secondary sources, such as Java.

Whether or not the art of Śrīvijaya will ever be known to have matched the illustriousness of its kings and religious institutions, the maritime empire of Śrīvijaya played a crucial role in the cross-pollination of Asian culture during a period of intense international activity. Carried along on the many ships that traversed the seas were the instruments of the spread of Pāla culture—the intrepid pilgrims, monks, and merchants and the treasures they brought with them.

#### SOUTHWESTERN CHINA: THE YUNNAN REGION

Although the Yunnan region is presently in the country of China (fig. 20), its history is inextricably linked with that of the Southeast Asian world. Indeed, the local populace is not Chinese, but rather is believed to be related to the ethnic groups found in Thailand and other regions of Southeast Asia. First under the Nanzhao kings and later under the Dali (see Appendix III, Charts 9 and 10), the region became politically important and powerful from the seventh through the mid-thirteenth centuries, until the Mongol armies conquered Yunnan in 1253.<sup>73</sup> The economy prospered through overland trade, and Dali effectively controlled the trade routes along the Mekong and Salween river gorges.

As far as is known, Pāla artistic influence in Yunnan appears only in a single image type, a representation of Avalokiteśvara that served as a talisman to the Dali kings and which was duplicated numerous times by them (for discussion, see cat. no. 88). The original iconographic source for the image type may have been brought to Yunnan from India as early as the seventh century, although the surviving images are apparently all later in date. In style, the images reveal not only the imprint of Pāla art, but



Figure 20. Map of Asia highlighting Yunnan.

traces of the Pallava art of southern India and Southeast Asian styles as well. This stylistic complexity is not surprising in light of Yunnan's geographic situation and reflects the complicated path by which the Indian style reached Yunnan.<sup>74</sup>

The Yunnanese practice of using a talismanic image type strongly relates to concepts of royal empowerment prevalent in Southeast Asia.<sup>75</sup> Although the origins of this practice are unknown, it is likely to have developed very early in the Buddhist tradition. However, the emphasis on talismanic properties appears to have become more pronounced after Buddhism left its homeland. In foreign lands, Buddhism generally was initially a religion of the elite members of society rather than the general populace, and the concept of the talisman became inextricably related to concepts of kingship and the legitimization of kings. While Buddhist relics could never be replicated, but could only be stolen and restolen, images based on an authentic model could be copied and recopied, thus providing their makers with the possibility of infinite sources of power.

#### OTHER REGIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Although Pāla influence may be traced in other areas of Southeast Asia not covered in this survey, it is for the most part manifested in minor details and specific motifs in the art. The influence in some regions of Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam and Kampuchea, probably occurred indirectly, rather than through ongoing or extensive contacts with the Pāla world. For example, even though the art of Kampuchea displays tantric iconography that is ultimately traceable to a Pāla source, it is likely that the influence spread through the intermediary of the Indonesian kingdoms of Java and Sumatra. Certain elements in the art, such as crown types,

headdresses, and foliate motifs might be specifically traceable to a Pāla ancestor, but they appear to be quoted from Pāla art rather than part of a broader Pāla cultural influence. The artistic influence seen in Champa (Vietnam) must have reached the region through secondary and even tertiary sources and is dominated by other artistic styles.<sup>76</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Pāla cultural influence in Southeast Asia is highly visible in a number of artistic traditions. However, the impact of Pāla culture was unevenly manifested, and Pāla influence reached Southeast Asia by a number of distinctive paths. To a large extent, the impact of Pāla culture was determined by the receptivity of its new hosts, who borrowed selectively from it.

The permanence of the Pāla legacy in Southeast Asia depended upon many factors, including the political and economic histories of the many Southeast Asian kingdoms, as well as the dynamics of the international arena in which they participated. The ongoing, mutual interchanges among Myanmar, Thailand, and Sri Lanka strongly affected the way that Pāla culture was received in mainland Southeast Asia and ultimately accounted for the fact that the Pāla cultural strand was overshadowed by other developments. Buddhism in these regions was intimately linked with the desire to achieve a "pure" form of the religion, which was manifested in the continual quest to obtain primary texts and properly ordained monks. Coupled with this ongoing process of cleansing and renewal was the desire to obtain and possess sources of Buddhist power, namely, Buddhist relics, objects that were in other ways associated with the physical body of Śākyamuni Buddha (such as the *bodhi* tree planted by King Tiloka), and talismanic images. The effectiveness of these sources of power was determined by how closely they were related to the historical Buddha. Unlike the Pāla rulers whose very kingdom possessed some of the most powerful images and sacred places of Buddhism, the kings of Myanmar and Thailand constantly had to seek to empower their realms with new sources of authority.

Although the Buddhists of Indonesia did not look to Sri Lanka for religious inspiration, the Indonesians were also highly selective in what they incorporated into their already complicated hierarchical society. The specific means by which the most esoteric forms of Buddhism were adopted and the reasons they were preferred by the kings of Java remain to be explained. However, Javanese art and culture reflect the religious avant-garde of the day, suggesting that the Indonesian Buddhists were involved in a continuing dialogue with monks and scholars at the premiere Buddhist institutions of the Pāla kingdom.

As in Myanmar and Thailand, Indonesian kings counted religious practices among their duties as rulers and imparted additional levels of meaning to the religious symbols they invoked.

An examination of the role of Pāla culture in Southeast Asia supplies only one small piece of the puzzle of Southeast Asian history, for Southeast Asia's great diversity has resulted from many factors, both internal and external. Nonetheless, the Pāla religious and artistic traditions presented Southeast Asia with cultural resources that never obliterated the indigenous creativity of the Southeast Asian artists, but did offer them another source of inspiration.

1. For the most thoroughgoing and pioneering overview of the relations between India and Southeast Asia, see George Coëdes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella and trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968).
2. Haraprasad Sastri, ed., *Rāmācaritam of Sandhyākaranandin*, Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. 3, no. 1 (Calcutta, 1910; revised with English translation and notes by Radhagovinda Basak, Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1969), 3.
3. It has been argued that the concept of the Bodhisattva was important in the Pāli tradition. See Shanta Ratnayaka, "The Bodhisattva Ideal of Theravāda," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 8, no. 2 (1985): 85-110. However, compared with Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism, the Pāli tradition's emphasis on the Bodhisattva is limited.
4. Burma officially changed the spelling of its name in English to Myanmar in June, 1989. In addition, the spelling of the name of the capital city was changed from Rangoon to Yangon.
5. For a study of ancient Arakan, see Pamela Gutman, *Ancient Arakan with Special Reference to its Cultural History Between the 5th and 11th Centuries* (Ph. D. diss., Australian National University, 1976). I am grateful to Forrest McGill for supplying this reference.
6. For a thorough discussion of Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism in the culture of Myanmar, see Nihar-Ranjan Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1936).
7. Gordon H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 25, 3 vols. (Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin for Artibus Asiae and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1969-1970), vol. 1, 8.
8. Hinduism is not discussed in this essay; however, the important role of Hinduism in the complex relationships between the Pāla region and Myanmar is a subject worthy of future research.
9. G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), 30.
10. Among the remains believed to be of Aniruddha's reign or shortly before, the Buddha life scene reliefs in the Kyaukkū Onhmin Temple at Pagán are closest to the Pāla idiom. See Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 44, for attribution of date and vol. 3, pl. 142.
11. Hall believes that Thāton Buddhism was based on that which flourished in southern India at Kāñcīpuram rather than the Sri Lankan form. See D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1987), 167. (Hall uses the name Conjeeveram rather than Kāñcīpuram.)
12. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 304.
13. For details of the quarrel between Aniruddha and Kyanzittha, see Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 52.
14. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 61.
15. Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, 163, citing Gordon H. Luce, "The Career of Htilaing Min (Kyanzittha), the Unifier of Burma, A.D. 1084-1113," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, pts. 1-2 (1966), 65.
16. See Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 3, pl. 344.
17. For a painting of a Bodhisattva, see Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 3, pl. 345.
18. See Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 3, pls. 277-322, espec. 277, 290, 293-317.
19. See Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 3, pls. 320-323, espec. 323 in relationship to fig. 6 in this catalogue.
20. *Epigraphia Birmanica* 1, pt. 2, 153-168; also see Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 62.
21. As quoted in Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 62.

22. For discussion of a Bengali style that is strongly related to some Myanmar imagery, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 168-169 and 179-180.
23. For discussion of relationships between Myanmar and southern Magadhan metal images, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 150-151.
24. See Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, vol. 1, 53-54.
25. For illustrations, see Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, vol. 3, pls. 215-240.
26. Harvey, *History of Burma*, 48.
27. For a summary of the founding of the New Order and the First Pilgrim of Sri Lanka and the Second Pilgrim of Sri Lanka, see Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, 167.
28. Michael Aung-Thwin attributes the fall of Pagan to the state's patronage of the monasteries and its enormous temple-building activities, which destroyed the economic basis of the kingdom. See Michael Aung-Thwin, *Pagan: The Origins of Modern Burma* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).
29. Gordon H. Luce, "Sources of Early Burma History," in C. D. Cowan and O. W. Wolters, eds., *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D. G. E. Hall* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), 39, 41-42.
30. For a summary of the misreadings of the stone inscription by earlier authors, see Luce, "Sources of Early Burma History," 38.
31. Luce suggests the cause might have been either the Ghaznavid Muslims, who sacked Benares in 1033-1034, or the Cedi king Karna, who invaded Magadha in 1039. See Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, vol. 1, 62. Neither of these invaders is known to have visited Bodhi Gaya.
32. From the *Nidāna Ārambha-kathā*, as quoted in A. B. Griswold, "The Holy Land Transported: Replicas of the Mahābodhi Shrine in Siam and Elsewhere," in *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume on Art and Architecture and Oriental Studies* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1965), 187.
33. For examples, see Sylvia Fraser-Lu, "Buddha Images from Burma Part 2: Bronze and Related Metals," *Arts of Asia* 11, no. 2 (March-April 1981), 68 (bottom right), 69 (top left).
34. See, for example, Piriya Krairiksh, *Art in Peninsular Thailand Prior to the Fourteenth Century A.D.* (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, [1980]), pls. 48, 50, and 51.
35. The whole question of Pagan as a source for the art of northern Thailand warrants serious study. For some evidence of fourteenth-century contact, see G. H. Luce and Ba Shin, "A Chiang Mai Mahāthera Visits Pagan (1393 A.D.)," *Artibus Asiae* 24, nos. 3-4 (1961): 330-337.
36. Alexander Griswold, *Dated Buddha Images of Northern Siam* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1957).
37. For further discussion of King Tiloka, see Donald K. Swearer and Sommai Premchit, "The Relationship Between the Religious and Political Orders in Northern Thailand (14th-16th Centuries)," in *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos, and Burma*, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima, 1978): 20-33.
38. See Griswold, *Dated Buddha Images*, 25-27, for the story of the monk Sumana and the images he had made, and the story of the so-called Kamphaengphet image.
39. Griswold, *Dated Buddha Images*, 17.
40. Textual sources suggest that the planting of the tree was the major motivation behind King Tiloka's replication of the Mahābodhi Temple. See Griswold, "The Holy Land Transported," 182-183.
41. See Stanley J. Tambiah, "Famous Buddha images and the legitimation of kings," *Res* 4 (Autumn 1982): 5-19.
42. The close relationships between the Pāla-based images and a Māravijaya type that developed at Sukhothai should also be studied. The Sukhothai images show the Buddha seated with his legs in the so-called "tailor posture" and wearing a garment with a long flap over the left shoulder that reaches to around the navel. The Pāla-derived images show the legs in the full lotus position and a garment with a short flap over the left shoulder that reaches to about the nipple. While the image types appear to be very close, the treatment of the drapery in particular seems to suggest that they derive from two different sources, for the short flap relates to the way in which the robe is shown in Pāla imagery, while the long flap prevails in southern Indian images, such as those from Nāgapaṭṭinam, and may be presumed to relate to the Sri Lankan tradition as well. For examples with the long flap from Nāgapaṭṭinam, see T. N. Ramachandran, *The Nāgapaṭṭinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum*, Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, New Series, General Section 7, no. 1 (Madras: Director of Stationary and Printing, Madras, on Behalf of the Government of Madras, 1965), pl. 2, fig. 3; pl. 3, and pl. 4, figs. 1 and 4.
43. The date of construction is unknown, but it is claimed that an inscription from the temple dated 1500 mentions its existence. I have been unable to trace a published translation of this inscription. See Robert L. Brown, "Bodhgaya and South-East Asia," in Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment* (Bombay: Marg, 1988), 108-111. A. B. Griswold suggests that it may have been built during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. See Griswold, "The Holy Land Transported," 211.
44. See J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "The 'Stone Buddha' of Chiangmai and its Inscription," *Artibus Asiae* 24, nos. 3-4 (1961): 324-329.
45. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "The Stone Buddha of Chiangmai," 324.
46. Reginald Le May, *A Concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1962), 104.
47. George Coëdes, "Note sur une stèle Indienne d'époque Pāla découverte à Ayudhya (Siam)," *Artibus Asiae* 22, nos. 1-2 (1959): 9-14.
48. Griswold, *Dated Buddha Images*, 17.
49. See cat. no. 1 for discussion of the Sultāngāñ piece.
50. The Javanese capital shifted from the central region to the east in the early tenth century, followed by a brief period of transition until about 928, during which a number of kings seem to have ruled Central and Eastern Java simultaneously. At least four phases can be identified in the Eastern Javanese period: from the early tenth century to about 1049, when the center was in the region south of Surabaya; from about 1049 to 1222, when the center was in Kaḍiri in present Kediri; from 1222 to 1292, when the center was in Singhasāri near Malang; and from 1292 to the early sixteenth century, when the center was in Majapahit, which has been identified as Trowulan near Mojokerto. See Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 9. The stylistic association with Pāla imagery is seen mainly in the Central Javanese phase and the earliest phase of the Eastern Javanese period.
51. Much of the understanding of Javanese chronology and history is based on the study of Javanese inscriptions by J. G. de Casparis in his *Inscripties uit de Čailendra-tijd*, *Prasasti Indonesia*, diterbitkan oleh Djawatan Purbakala Republik Indonesia 1 (Bandung, Java: Dinas Purbakala [Indonesian Department of Archaeology], 1950) and *Selected inscriptions from the 7th to the 9th century A. D.*, *Prasasti Indonesia* 2 (Bandung, Java: Dinas Purbakala [Indonesian Department of Archaeology], 1956). De Casparis' work has been summarized in D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, chap. 3, 55ff. For the Javanese inscriptions, see also Himansu Bhusan Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java (Corpus Inscriptionum Javanicarum) (up to 928 A.D.)*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1972).
52. The Śailendras are mentioned for the first time in the so-called Kalasan inscription of A. D. 778 and ruled until about 856. The date of their accession is unknown, but they may have been in power as early as the first half of the seventh century. See Scheurleer and Klokke, *Divine Bronze*, 6-7.
53. The Śaṅjaya kings are known from the oldest dated Central Javanese epigraph, the so-called Canggal inscription, which is dated Śaka Era 654, equivalent to A. D. 732, and which records the dedication of a Śiva līṅga by a king named Śaṅjaya. See Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java*, vol. 1, 15-24. In a much later inscription inscribed on a pair of copperplates and dated Śaka Era 829, corresponding to A. D. 907, Śaṅjaya's position as the first king in the so-called Matarām lineage is clarified and the names of the other kings are given. See Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java*, vol. 2, 64-81.
54. This is suggested by three inscriptions: the Kalasan inscription of 778, an undated inscription from the Ratuboko plateau, and the Karangtengah inscription of 824. See Scheurleer and Klokke, *Divine Bronze*, 7.
55. Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, 56, summarizing de Casparis.
56. The descendants of the union between this Śaṅjaya prince, who later became king, and his Śailendra wife considered themselves to be members of the Śaṅjaya family, but their titles also reveal their Śailendra heritage.
57. It is widely believed that the struggle between the Śailendras and Śaṅjayas was purely political and not religious. If a princess of the Śailendra family had married into the Śaṅjaya family, as Bālaputra's sister did, there is no reason to expect that she and her relatives would not have continued to produce Buddhist works.
58. Bālaputra may have had some claim to the Śrīvijaya throne through his mother's side. Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, 58.
59. Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, 56-57.
60. Hirananda Sastri, "The Nalanda Copper-plate of Devapaladeva," *Epigraphia Indica* 17 (1923-1924): 310-327.
61. Sastri, "Nalanda Copper-plate," 312.
62. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 26.
63. For some discussion of kingship in Java, see F. H. van Naerssen, "Tribute to the God and Tribute to the King," in C. D. Cowan and O. W. Wolters, eds., *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D. G. E. Hall* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), 296-303.
64. The commercial history of Asia before the tenth century is documented

- in a very fragmentary way. Chinese sources are the principal source of information before about the ninth century, after which Arab sources are known. For Arab sources, see K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
65. See O. W. Wolters, "Śrīvijayan Expansion in the Seventh Century," *Artibus Asiae* 24, nos. 3-4 (1961): 417-424.
  66. See J. Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671-695) by I-Tsing* (London: The Clarendon Press, 1896; reprint, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1966), xxxiv.
  67. For a summary, see Alaka Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet* (Calcutta: Indian Studies Past and Present, 1967), 84-95.
  68. Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet*, 94. After his stay in Śrīvijaya, Atiśa returned to the Pāla kingdom, where he rose to a high rank at Vikramaśīla monastery. The teachings that he acquired in Śrīvijaya are likely to have had considerable impact on the developments of Buddhism in the Pāla regions.
  69. Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, 64, citing the work of George Coëdes.
  70. Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet*, 86, tells a story of Dharmakīrti, Atiśa's Śrīvijayan teacher, and how through his worship of an image of the Buddha, "the people reaped an abundant harvest and enjoyed immunity from visitation of epidemics." He then "caused" all the people of Suvarṇadvīpa to practice the Buddhist religion. Such stories—and there are many—demonstrate that material rewards were seen as an inevitable result of religious action.
  71. This information is recorded in the so-called Larger Leiden grant. See Ramachandran, *The Nāgapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum*, 17. The inscription is dated in the twenty-first year of the reign of Rājaraṇa I (1006) and calls King Māraviṇyottuṅgavarman a member of the Śailendra dynasty. King Māraviṇyottuṅgavarman named the monastery after his father, Cūlamanivarman. The inscription associates the Śrīvijaya king with the Śailendra dynasty, so apparently the kings of Śrīvijaya continued to assert their Śailendra origins. For the full inscription, see K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyer, "The Larger Leiden Plates (of Rājaraṇa I)," *Epigraphia Indica* 22 (1933-1934): 213-266.
  72. Recently, great efforts have been made in Southeast Asia to uncover the mysteries of Śrīvijaya. See the reports published by SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization) listed in the bibliography.
  73. For a history of the region, see Charles Backus, *The Nan-chao kingdom and T'ang China's southwestern frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). The Nanzhao kingdom lasted from 649 to 902 and the Dali kingdom lasted from 902 to 1253.
  74. A similarly mixed artistic tradition showing influences from southern India and various idioms in mainland Southeast Asia is found in Champa (Vietnam). However, unlike the Yunnanese image type, which traces its sources specifically to India and which may have arisen from direct influences from the Pāla regions, the Champa examples are more remote from a Pāla connection. See Jean Boisselier, *La Statuaire du Champa, Recherches sur les cultes et l'iconographie*, Publications de l'école française d'extrême-orient, vol. 54 (Paris: École française d'extrême-orient, 1963), 77-81. I am grateful to Forrest McGill for calling the Champa images to my attention.
  75. For discussion of talismanic images in Southeast Asia, see Tambiah, "Famous Buddha images."
  76. See Boisselier, *La Statuaire du Champa*, fig. 31, for example.



# CATALOGUE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AND SOUTHERN CHINESE OBJECTS

61

BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA) AND POST-ENLIGHTENMENT EVENTS WITH SEVEN OTHER BUDDHA LIFE SCENES

Myanmar (Burma), probably Pagan  
Ca. eleventh or twelfth century, Pagan period  
*Andagu* stone (yellowish-beige pyrophyllite [scientifically tested]) with traces of gilding  
H: 7 3/4" W: 4 1/2" D: 2"  
The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.90)

A number of plaques carved of the same stone,<sup>1</sup> depicting variations on the same iconography, and resembling one another in style and size have been found at distant places in Asia, thus raising questions about their place of manufacture. Often called "*andagu* plaques" after the Myanmari (Burmese) name for the stone out of which they are carved, the plaques have generated considerable discussion among scholars. At first such plaques were believed to have been made in the Bodh Gayā region,<sup>2</sup> and their discovery at far-flung places in Asia has been used to argue for their possible use as mementos of pilgrimage to Bodh Gayā.<sup>3</sup> However, while these plaques bear obvious similarities to Pāla imagery in both style and subject matter, it is unlikely that they were produced at Bodh Gayā or any other site in the Pāla lands. Further, in spite of their small size, which made them easily portable, it is unknown whether they were pilgrimage mementos or served other purposes.

The external factors—the distribution of findspots and comparisons with Pāla works of art—and internal factors such as style and subject matter both indicate that the plaques were not produced by Pāla craftsmen. Only a single fragment of one has been found in India proper, at Sārnāth rather than Bodh Gayā.<sup>4</sup> However, at least eight examples have been found in Myanmar (Burma), strongly suggesting a local center of production there.<sup>5</sup> Export from Myanmar to other regions of Asia, such as Sri Lanka and the Tibetan cultural region, where examples also have been found,<sup>6</sup> is not difficult to imagine in light of the prominence of Myanmar in the dynamics of international

trade and travel around the time the plaques were made.

The iconography of the *andagu* plaques clearly is based on the Pāla model, in which the Māravijaya scene is featured in the center and surrounded by seven other Buddha life scenes. However, many of the *andagu* plaques, including the two in this exhibition (see also cat. no. 62), also bear a series of figures representing the Buddha's activities at Bodh Gayā during the seven weeks following his enlightenment that are elaborations of the central Māravijaya theme. The inclusion of these figures is a key element in determining that the plaques were not made in the Pāla lands.

The central Buddha-to-be sits under the *bodhi* tree and displays the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) with his right hand. The tiny warriors comprising Māra's armies hurl their ineffective weapons near his head. At Śākyamuni's sides stand the Bodhisattvas Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara, who are often shown attending the Buddha-to-be in the Māravijaya scene in Pāla art (cat. no. 29). Seven additional life scenes, the same ones that are popularly shown in Pāla art, are arranged around the rim. Beginning at the lower left, these are the birth, the first sermon, the taming of Nālagiri, the *parinirvāṇa* (at the top), the descent from Trāyastriṃśa, the miracle at Śrāvastī, and the offering of the monkey. In spite of the small scale of these carvings, the scenes are highly detailed and easily recognizable.

The activities of the seven weeks following the enlightenment of the Buddha are shown by six figures arranged in two columns on either side of the central scene, as well as the central scene itself. Each of the events lasted for a week and took place at a different spot near the sacred tree at Bodh Gayā. The events of these forty-nine days and the so-called seven stations where they occurred are described in numerous Buddhist texts. However, as is generally the case, texts reflect different traditions that evolved independently, as well as various stages in these developments. Without knowing the specific details about the tradition current when these images were made, it is difficult to be certain of the identification of the events. However, five can be recognized with relative certitude because of their distinctive characteristics or because they are cited consistently even in different textual sources.

Various texts agree that during the first week after the enlightenment, the Buddha remained under the *bodhi* tree and continued to meditate. The first week and the station where this continued meditation occurred are implicit in the central Māravijaya scene. Texts also generally agree that the Buddha spent the second week gazing intently at the *bodhi* tree and that during the third week he walked up and down a promenade near the *bodhi* tree. The two standing Buddhas shown flanking the central figure's head are likely to represent these two weeks, during which the Buddha's standing position is implicit.

The activity of another week, usually cited as either the fifth or the sixth week, is also recognizable among the scenes depicted, for during this period of seven days the Buddha was protected from heavy rains by the serpent Mucilinda. In this plaque, the serpent hood above the Buddha near the central figure's left knee identifies the event.<sup>7</sup> The final week may also be recognized because at the end of the week, which the Buddha spent in meditation under a *rājayatana* tree, the Buddha was offered food by two merchants. These two individuals, Trapuṣa and Bhallika, are generally considered to be the Buddha's first lay disciples. The seated Buddha near the central figure's right knee holds the bowl in which he received the offering and may therefore be identified as depicting this final event in the forty-nine day period.

The remaining two Buddhas in the center of each column are seated in meditation. Because they lack individualizing details and because textual accounts differ on the activities of the remaining two weeks, it is impossible to be certain of their identification. One text that might have formed a basis for the Myanmar tradition, the *Nidāna-kathā*,<sup>8</sup> states that in the fourth week the Buddha sat cross-legged contemplating and formulating the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* in a house made of gems that had been created by the *devas* near the *bodhi* tree. The same text records that the fifth week was spent at "the shepherd's" *nigrodha* tree, where he meditated on the truth and enjoyed the sweetness of *nirvāṇa*.<sup>9</sup> Simultaneously, the defeated Māra brooded over the things the Buddha had attained but he had not. Seeing his dejection, Māra's daughters wanted to help him and decided to try to seduce the Buddha, but of course they failed.<sup>10</sup> One of the meditating Buddhas thus might represent the meditation during which the daughters of Māra staged their seduction. Other events cited in texts that could be denoted by the two seated Buddhas include the Buddha receiving the devotions of the *devas*, his meditations under a banyan tree, and his meditations for a week in a place where the god Brahmā requested the Buddha to teach.<sup>11</sup>

The presence of the seven stations at Bodh Gayā on this and other examples of the *andagu* plaques is a powerful argument against their Pāla manufacture. Although the actual "seven stations" at Bodh Gayā were certainly an

important aspect of the veneration of the site, they were not equally important to practitioners of different schools of Buddhism. It may be suggested that the forms of Buddhism reflected in Pāla period Buddhist art did not emphasize the seven stations, even though during the Pāla period Buddhists from other regions of Asia and practicing other forms of Buddhism may have held them in great esteem (and simultaneously may have practiced their religion at Bodh Gayā). Considering the vast corpus of known Pāla imagery and the overwhelming popularity of the theme of the Māravijaya in Pāla art, it is notable that not a single surviving sculpture or painting shows the seven stations or their associated events. However, one plaque from Nālandā displays a variation on the theme of the post-enlightenment events in which four, not seven, activities are depicted, along with the usual eight Buddha life scenes.<sup>12</sup> This suggests that Pāla Buddhism may have emphasized a tradition of four, not seven, post-enlightenment events and that the tradition was not an important one, since the events apparently were portrayed so rarely. It is notable that the emphasis on four events is preserved in Tibet,<sup>13</sup> suggesting a Pāla-based tradition there.

In contrast, the emphasis on the seven stations is associated with the schools of Buddhism that flourished in Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka, perhaps based on a southern Indian tradition.<sup>14</sup> The theme is well known in the art and literature of Sri Lanka and even today is a focus of Sri Lankan religious practice. It is likely that the focus on the seven stations was already established in Sri Lankan Buddhism when, in the late eleventh century, King Kyanzittha of Myanmar (reigned ca. 1084-1113) decided to collect and purify the Tripiṭaka, the sacred texts of Pāli Buddhism.<sup>15</sup> Turning to Sri Lanka for what he considered to be the authentic, orthodox texts, Kyanzittha dramatically altered the course of Myanmar Buddhism by emphasizing the Sri Lankan school of Buddhism rather than the Pāla or other Indic traditions. Although King Aniruddha before him had probably paved the way for contacts with Sri Lanka, it is Kyanzittha who is credited with having changed the direction of Myanmar Buddhism. It may be suggested that the addition of the seven stations to what was otherwise an overwhelmingly Pāla iconographic program in the *andagu* plaques reflects this cultural shift toward Sri Lankan Buddhism. The importance of the seven stations in Myanmar Buddhism was apparently preserved, for they were reproduced architecturally as an integral part of the fifteenth-century recreation of the Mahābodhi Temple at Pegu in Myanmar, suggesting their lasting importance in the art of Myanmar.<sup>16</sup>

Other elements in the plaque beside the addition of the seven stations also confirm a non-Pāla origin, in spite of its clear derivation from a Pāla model. Another feature apparently introduced by the Myanmaris is the pair of

trees in the *parinirvāṇa* scene. Textual descriptions of the Buddha's death explain that there was a *śāla* tree at his head and another at his feet at the time of his passing. However, these are rarely, if ever, shown in Pāla renditions of the subject.

The complicated pedestal of the image also suggests a departure from Pāla norms, both in its two-tiered, rather than single-tiered, arrangement and in the organization of the individual sections. In the usual Pāla *ratha* pedestal the central bay projects forward and similarly sized and spaced side bays seem to recede behind the central bay (cat. no. 36). In contrast, here the central bay is one of three similar central elements flanked by smaller sections that do not recede noticeably. In addition, the bays at the two ends project rather than recede.

The motifs and figures displayed on the pedestal also suggest a departure from Pāla precedents, although they clearly are derived from Pāla models. The crouching lions and the elephant on the upper tier of the pedestal are common elements on Pāla pedestals, but these animals are far smaller in scale than the usual Pāla depictions. Likewise, the inclusion of the earth goddess beneath the figure of the Buddha-to-be is a common element in Pāla art, but in this carving the earth goddess is shown as a tiny figure at the lower left of the pedestal rather than integrated into the central scene. Rising as if in response to the touch of the Buddha's right hand, the earth goddess is recognized by her characteristic kneeling posture and the jar she holds. While her attribute and stance are clearly modeled on Pāla prototypes (cat. no. 15), the figure is much smaller and more insignificant than in Pāla renderings of the subject, and her placement distances her from the central scene. A comparable figure at the right of the pedestal is too indistinct to identify, but may represent a second goddess, *Aparājītā*, who is sometimes also shown in Pāla representations of the *Māravijaya*.<sup>17</sup>

Between these two figures and across the lower part of the base, the seven jewels (*saptaratna*) of the universal king (*cakravartin*, literally, world sovereign) are depicted. From the left, they appear to be the perfect horse, the Dharma (represented by a wheel) (?), the perfect minister (?), the perfect general (?), the perfect wife, riches (represented by a gem) (?), and an elephant. Arranged beneath the being who is the paradigm of the *cakravartin*, these symbols are fittingly displayed along with scenes extolling the Buddha's greatest achievement, for he was indeed the rightful ruler of all the world, as symbolized by the earth-touching gesture. In spite of their appropriateness in representations of the historical Buddha and his achievements, the jewels are not commonly included in Pāla renditions of Buddha life events. Examples are known,<sup>18</sup> suggesting a Pāla prototype, but the prominence of the theme on this and other examples of the *andagu* plaques suggests a special importance in Pagan, perhaps

related to developing conceptions of kingship that emphasized the *cakravartin* ideal.<sup>19</sup>

A Pāla source for other elements in the composition is also clear. For example, the double lotus pedestal upon which the central Buddha-to-be sits is a direct adoption from the late Pāla artistic idiom. The foliate motifs below and the two supplicating serpent (*nāga*) figures also have Pāla precedents. A similar but not identical configuration occurs in a metal image of a Buddha from Fatehpur in southern Magadha.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the organization and pattern of the architectural divisions of the base, which apparently conform to Myanmari rather than Pāla conventions, the central figure of the Buddha-to-be is executed in the Myanmari style. Major characteristics of the style include a head that is large in proportion to the body, a short neck, and a downward tilt to the head that exaggerates the short neck. The forehead is expansive and high. The position of the eyes is lowered from a more natural position to a point about halfway down the face. The eyes are slitlike and the brow exaggerated and prominent. The lips are thin and positioned very close to the nose. The ears are curvaceous. Compared with Pāla examples, the *ūrṇā* is large. The Buddha's torso is broad-shouldered and his arms are massive and rounded.

Unlike Pāla representations, the halos behind the two standing Buddhas at the tops of the sides of the plaque rise to a point that is not indented at the side. The abstract edging made of rectilinear elements is also atypical of Pāla examples and may reflect a local Myanmari convention.

All of the so-called *andagu* plaques may not have been produced during the same period. Based on comparisons with Pāla imagery, details such as the treatment of the lotus pedestal would suggest an eleventh- or twelfth-century date for this example, but a slightly later date has been suggested for cat. no. 62.

The syllable OM is inscribed on the back of this plaque in Tibetan characters. The Tibetan writing suggests that the piece had been carried to Tibet, where the inscription was added, or that it was acquired by a Tibetan travelling abroad.

The exquisite quality of the carving of this and the other known *andagu* plaques, and their manufacture out of what must have been a luxury stone prized for its fine grain and lustrous surface, make it easy to understand why they were transported to the far corners of Asia, for they must have been treasures even in their own day.

#### PUBLISHED:

Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd—Part 2* (New York: The Asia Society, 1975), 24-25, 33, and cover illustration, no. 13; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection*

(New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 43; Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "Burmese Sculpture and Indian Painting," *Chhavi—2: Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume* (Varanasi: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1981), mentioned p. 22 n. 17; Gian Carlo Calza, "Musei: L'Asia in Casa," *Antiquariato* 34 (Gennaio, 1983), 44-51; Susan L. Huntington, "Pre-Pāla and Pāla Period Sculptures in the Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), mentioned p. 378 n. 16; Pratapaditya Pal, organizer, *Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian Art* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1984), 62, 147, 162, no. 10; Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), 17, 34-35, 68, 77, 84; Robert L. Brown, "John D. Rockefeller, 3rd (1906-1978)," in *American Collectors of Asian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1986), 65, no. 12b; Robert L. Brown, "Bodhgaya and South-East Asia," in *Bodhgaya: The Site of Enlightenment*, ed. Janice Leoshko (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1988), 113-114.

1. The stone of the two examples included in this exhibition (cat. nos. 61 and 62) has been scientifically identified as pyrophyllite. While it is difficult to be certain that the others are of the same material merely by looking at them, their similar appearance strongly suggests that this is the case. This stone was also used by the Tibetans. For discussion of this type of stone, see cat. nos. 127-130.
2. J. Ph. Vogel, "Note on a Buddhist Sculpture from Kandy, Ceylon," *Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, n.s., 11 (1915): 297-303.
3. The suggestion of the Bodh Gayā provenance of the plaques and their use as mementos of visits to Bodh Gayā was reaffirmed recently by Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., in his "Burmese Sculpture and Indian Painting," *Chhavi—2: Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume* (Varanasi: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1981), 23.
4. For the Sāmāth fragment, see "Excavations at Sarnath," *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1904-1905*, 84, fig. 8.
5. For illustrations of examples that have been excavated in Myanmar, see *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1928-1929*, 113, pl. 52; Gordon H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 25, 3 vols. (Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin for Artibus Asiae and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1969-1970), vol. 3, pls. 400-405. Since the publication of Luce's book, most scholars have accepted Myanmar as the place of manufacture for the *andagu* plaques.
6. At least three *andagu* plaques have been found in Sri Lanka. Another was found in the Himalayan region of northwestern India in the Tibetan cultural area near the Tibetan border. Three plaques, including the present example in the collection of the Asia Society, bear Tibetan inscriptions on the back, and another has a Chinese inscription on the back, suggesting that the plaques had been exported to Tibet and China. See Woodward, "Burmese Sculpture and Indian Painting," 22-23, especially 22 nn. 18 and 19. An example in the collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art has a Newari inscription on the back, indicating that it had been transported to Nepal. See Margaret F. Marcus, "Sculptures from Bihar and Bengal," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art for October 1967*, 54 (Oct. 1967), 256, figs. 15-18. The overwhelming similarities among the known examples make it highly unlikely that there was more than one place of manufacture. It could be argued that the artists themselves travelled, thus accounting for the distant findspots. However, unless the artists carried the distinctive stone with them, it would be expected that examples would be found made of locally available materials.
7. Independent representations of the Buddha being sheltered by Mucilinda are quite rare in India but are popular in other regions of Asia, particularly Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.
8. The *Nidāna-kathā* is a Sri Lankan account of the Buddha's life that serves as an introduction to the *jātaka* stories in Pāli literature. See T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Buddhist Birth Stories or Jātaka Tales* (London:

- Trübner and Co., 1880), 1-133.
9. Rhys Davids, *Nidāna Kathā in Buddhist Birth Stories or Jātaka Tales*, 106.
  10. Thus, in some accounts of the seven weeks following the enlightenment, the attempted seduction by Māra's daughters occurs during the post-enlightenment period rather than as part of the attack by Māra that occurred before the Buddha-to-be called the earth goddess to witness.
  11. See John C. Huntington, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism, Part 1," *Orientalism* (Nov. 1985), 55, 59. For textual sources for the Māravijaya and the post-enlightenment meditations, see John C. Huntington, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism, Part 5," *Orientalism* 17, no. 9 (Sept. 1986), 58.
  12. See John C. Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image: The Cult of the Aṣṭamahāpratihārya, Part II," *Orientalism* 18, no. 8 (Aug. 1987), fig. 18. The four events are shown by the central Buddha in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* and the three Buddhas below him. The central Māravijaya scene is counted in the series of eight life scenes and in the series of four post-enlightenment events.
  13. W. Woodville Rockhill, trans., *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order, Derived from Tibetan Works in the Bkah-Hgyur and Bstan-Hgyur* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1907), 33-35. According to this source, the Buddha so enjoyed his "newly discovered freedom" that he passed seven days without eating, but during the second week he was offered food by the two merchants. He spent the third week protected from the sun and rain by the serpent Mucilinda and the fourth week seated on a grass mat studying the twelve branches of the theory of causes and effects.
  14. A relief from Nāgarjunakōṇḍa dating from around the third century shows several of the events. See H. Sarkar, "The Nāgarjunakōṇḍa Phase of the Lower Kṛṣṇa Valley Art: A Study Based on Epigraphical Data," in Frederick M. Asher and G. S. Gai, eds., *Indian Epigraphy: Its Bearing on the History of Art* (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Publishing for the American Institute of Indian Studies, 1985), pl. 38. I am grateful to Donald M. Stadtner for pointing out this relief to me and for sharing his knowledge of Myanmar art.
  15. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, 61. Also 61-62 for further discussion of the importance of his actions.
  16. The seven stations in Myanmar art is the subject of study by Donald M. Stadtner. See Donald M. Stadtner, "King Dhammaceti's Pegu," *Orientalism* 21, no. 2 (Feb. 1990): 53-60, and his article forthcoming in *Art Bulletin*. The seven stations also were recreated in the reproductions of the Mahābodhi Temple at Chiangmai and Chiangrai in northern Thailand, indicating a common religious focus in the closely related traditions of Myanmar and Thailand.
  17. For identification and discussion of the second female as Aparājita, see Janice Leoshko, "The Case of the Two Witnesses to the Buddha's Enlightenment," in *A Pot-Pourri of Indian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1988): 39-52.
  18. The jewels are represented at the bottom center of the pedestal of the remarkable sculpture of the Māravijaya with seven life scenes at Jagdispur, a modern village on the grounds of Nālandā monastery. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 131. For their occurrence at Bodh Gayā, see Mireille Bénisti, *Contribution à l'Étude du Stūpa Bouddhique Indien: Les Stūpa Mineurs de Bodh-Gayā et de Ratnagiri*, Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2 vols. (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1981), vol. 1, 71-74.
  19. See Michael Aung-Thwin, *Pagan, The Origins of Modern Burma* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), chap. 3, "Political Ideology: Conceptions of Kingship," espec. 60-62.
  20. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 191.



BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER  
MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA) AND  
POST-ENLIGHTENMENT EVENTS WITH SEVEN  
OTHER BUDDHA LIFE SCENES

Myanmar (Burma), probably Pagan  
Ca. thirteenth century, Pagan period  
*Andagu* stone (yellowish-beige pyrophyllite  
[scientifically tested])

H: 7 3/8" W: 5 1/4" D: 1 1/2"

Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, Louis Sydney Thierry  
Memorial Fund (1979.328)

Illustrated in color

For general discussion of plaques of this type and their iconography, see cat. no. 61.

Following the popular Pāla format, the central scene of this plaque shows the Māravijaya at Bodh Gayā. The Buddha-to-be sits under the *bodhi* tree, with his right hand extended down in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*). In a columnlike arrangement flanking him, the armies of Māra hurl their powerless weapons at him. Two of Māra's daughters, sensuous beauties who had turned into emaciated hags before his gaze, stand at his sides.<sup>1</sup>

Surrounding the central Māravijaya is a complicated iconographic array of scenes and figures, neatly arranged in rows and columns. The lowest figure at the left along the outside of the plaque is the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, who is recognized by the lotus flower he carries. He sits in a relaxed posture atop a lotus flower that rises from a tall stem. His counterpart at the lower right along the outer edge of the plaque is the Bodhisattva Maitreya, who may be identified by the mouth-washing vase of purification (*kuṇḍikā* or *kamaṇḍalu*) he holds in his right hand and the *nāgakesara* flower in his left. A tiny, somewhat indistinct element in his headdress may represent his characteristic *stūpa*. Maitreya is seated in a relaxed posture that mirrors that of Avalokiteśvara. Together, the pair probably serves as attendants to the central Māravijaya scene, for in Pāla art they are often shown flanking the meditating Buddha-to-be (see cat. no. 29).

The other seven subjects depicted around the rim of the plaque are the seven Buddha life events that comprise the standard Pāla group. These are displayed in an identical order to those in the previous example (cat. no. 61). From the lower left, the scenes are the birth, the first sermon, the taming of Nālāgiri, the *parinirvāṇa* (at the top), the descent from Trāyastriṃśa, the miracle at Śrāvastī, and the offering of the monkey. Exquisitely carved with miniaturist precision, the scenes are easily recognizable because of the presence of well-established, distinctive elements, including the deer flanking the wheel in the first sermon, the tiny elephant in the taming of Nālāgiri, Indra and

Brahmā in the descent scene, the additional Buddhas in the Śrāvastī scene, and the Buddha holding the bowl in the gift of honey. The birth and *parinirvāṇa* are easily identified by the figures of Queen Māyā and the reclining Buddha, respectively.

The seven events following the victory over Māra that were added by the Myanmar artists to the Pāla core iconography are displayed in two columns, one on either side of the central figure and parallel to the life events along the sides of the rim. The order of these figures varies from that seen in the previous example (cat. no. 61). Here the events appear to be in chronological order. The first event is again implicit in the central composition, and the others seem to follow in sequence, beginning with the standing Buddha at the top right and continuing down the right column and then up the left column, concluding with the Buddha holding the begging bowl, signifying the end of the cycle. On the right from top to bottom the standing Buddhas refer to the second and third weeks and the bottom seated Buddha probably represents the fourth week. On the bottom left the Mucilinda scene occurs as the fifth event and is recognized by the serpent above the head of the Buddha. In the center left is another seated Buddha probably representing the sixth week, and the seventh week is recognized by the bowl resting in the lap of the top left Buddha.

Beneath the lowermost figures of the set are two seated, monklike figures who may represent the Buddha's chief disciples, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. While the two monks do not appear in Pāla imagery, they are often shown in Myanmar examples, suggesting a Myanmar emphasis on monasticism visible as early as the Pagan period.<sup>2</sup>

As in the previous example, the seven possessions of the *cakravartin* appear on the base, along with the earth goddess at the left and another figure, perhaps Aparājītā, at the right. Two other figures are also included, possibly representing donors or devotees.

The somewhat damaged upper rim of the plaque is edged with the *prabhā* motif so common in Pāla art, but here the rays are shown with simple, incised curves and are surprisingly simple considering the date of the carving. Near the upper edge, two disklike elements bear pairs of flying *vidyādhara*s carrying garlands toward the central figure.

Two serpents (*nāgas*) and the foliate motifs under the central figure are based on Indic precedents, as is the double lotus pedestal upon which the central figure sits. But the style of the central figure shows typical features of the art of Myanmar during the Pagan period and reveals a departure from the Pāla figural style. The oversize head is tilted downward and appears to have no neck. The forehead and shoulders are broad, and the torso and arms are almost puffy in appearance. The presence of the two

*śāla* trees in the *parinirvāṇa* scene is also a characteristically Myanmar and not Pāla feature. While probably based on Indic pedestals with their offsetting, the pedestal does not strictly follow the Pāla *ratha* model. In particular, while the bays near the center of the pedestal seem to recede slightly from the central bay, the ends of the pedestal have sections that appear to protrude forward in a fashion not found in Pāla examples. Like the preceding example, this pedestal is also double-tiered.

The differences in style and iconographic complexity between this *andagu* plaque and the preceding example are striking. Based on its relationships to Pāla period art of the twelfth century, it is unlikely that this example could date from prior to the twelfth century. The accentuated posture of Māyā as she gives birth to the Buddha-to-be in particular suggests a date no earlier than the twelfth century for this work. In contrast, the Asia Society example (cat. no. 61) seems to be earlier based on comparisons with Pāla period images. The differences in style between the central Buddha figures in the two plaques are notable and suggest at least two possibilities: first, that all of the plaques may not be of the same date and that there is a stylistic and iconographic progression in them or, alternatively, that all examples were not products of the same artistic atelier.

Another major difference between this example and cat. no. 61 is the relative scale of the central Māravijaya scene and the surrounding subjects. In this example, the subsidiary elements are much smaller in relation to the central scene. Although it could be argued that the artists had to reduce the subsidiary scenes to allow extra space for the two Bodhisattvas and the two monklike figures, it also would have been possible to reduce the size of the central figure slightly to accommodate the additional elements. Therefore, it is difficult to be certain of the reason for this change of scale, although it seems to reflect a deliberate choice intended to emphasize the central figure.

The arrangement of elements in the composition is much more gridlike and regimented than in the previous example. The columnlike arrangement of Māra's armies and daughters at the sides of the central Buddha conforms to the rectilinear arrangement of the other elements in the composition. The highly ordered arrangement of the plaque enhances the effect of the jewellike precision of the carving and adds to the beauty of the work.

#### PUBLISHED:

*Archives of Asian Art* 33 (1980), 119, fig. 11; Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), 35-36, 88, fig. 31; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International

Legacy," *Oriental Art*, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 36-37, fig. 12.

1. The depiction of the haglike daughters of Māra attending the central Buddha may be a subsense of the Māravijaya itself, or it may be part of the representation of the seven weeks, since in some accounts the temptation by Māra's daughters occurred during that period and not as part of the Māravijaya sequence.
2. For later examples, see Wladimir Zwalf, ed., *Buddhism: Art and Faith* (London: Trustees of the British Museum and the British Library Board, 1985), 164, no. 227; *Arts of Asia* 19, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1989), 63. An alternative but unverified possibility is that these two figures represent the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika, who offered food to the Buddha at the conclusion of the seven weeks following the enlightenment. According to a Myanmar tradition, the two merchants requested a memento from the Buddha, whereupon he pulled two hairs from his head. Brought back to Myanmar by the merchants, the relics were enshrined in the Schwedagon Stūpa in Yangon (Rangoon), where they are revered as a focus of Myanmar religious practice. Another tradition holds that the hairs were brought to Sri Lanka, not Myanmar, and some texts identify the merchants as travellers from Orissa in India and not Myanmar. The date at which this story was incorporated into Myanmar literature is unknown, and therefore its bearing on the iconography of this plaque cannot be determined precisely. Because the two figures in the plaque are unadorned and seem to be monks rather than lay persons, the suggestion is tentative.

#### 63

#### BUDDHA

Myanmar (Burma), probably Pagan  
Ca. twelfth century, Pagan period  
Copper alloy (untested) with silver inlay  
H: 19" W: 8 1/2" D: 3 5/8"  
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Alsdorf, Chicago  
Shown in Chicago only

This Buddha is virtually identical to a metal image of a standing Buddha currently housed at Pagan in a small makeshift shrine near the Ananda Okkaung Temple (fig. 16). The enshrined image is about four feet in height and is in perfect condition, allowing us to infer the complete appearance of this example. Based on comparison with the piece in Pagan, it may be suggested that the now-broken right hand of this image was held in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*) and the left was slightly lowered and held a flap of the Buddha's robe.

Both images reflect the superb metal craftsmanship that flourished in Myanmar (Burma) during the Pagan period, as known from the surviving examples. Images were highly standardized during that time, and it is therefore not surprising to find two images so astonishingly similar in every detail. The curvaceous lines of the Buddha's body, with its broad shoulders, shapely torso, slim hips, and full thighs, are standard for this period. The drapery, which clings almost invisibly to the body yet stands out stiffly at the bottom and breaks into a pattern of wavy folds at the hem, is also seen in other examples from Pagan. The crisp facial features have an upward curve to the eyes, cheeks, and mouth, which also constitutes a major element of the Pagan period style.

Closely modeled on Indic prototypes, the style of this image reflects the debt of the Pagan artists to the Pāla school. In particular, the definition of the body and the treatment of the face relate to the style prevalent in southern Magadha during the late Pāla period, as seen especially in metal images from Kurkihār<sup>1</sup> and Fatehpur.<sup>2</sup> Because of the well-known ties between Myanmar and Bodh Gayā, this association with southern Magadhan sites is not surprising. Although a school of metal sculpture associated with Bodh Gayā is unknown archaeologically, it is likely that such a school would have shared much with works from Kurkihār, Fatehpur, and other nearby sites.

In addition to the debt to Pāla art, it is possible that this image reflects contact with the Tamil region of south India. The precise treatment of the hem of the Buddha's robe, with its wavy folds, is not found in Pāla examples (contrast with cat. no. 47); however, it may be a modification of a style that occurs at Nāgapattinam.<sup>3</sup>

#### PUBLISHED:

Beurdeley, Matthews, and Co., Ltd., *Burmese Art and its Influences*, An Exhibition held at 16 Savile Row, London W.1, 8th to 25th April 1981 (London: Beurdeley, Matthews, and Co., [1981]), 24-25, no. 27.

1. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 185. The body shape appears on a number of other images from Kurkihār as well.
2. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 191.
3. Compare with T. N. Ramachandran, *The Nāgapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum* (Madras: Government of Madras, 1965), pl. 2, no. 1. Interestingly, the Nāgapattinam Buddha illustrated by Ramachandran may in turn reflect influence from the Pāla lands, as may be suggested by the double-shouldered robe and the folds of the garment as it falls across the body.

64

#### BUDDHA

Myanmar (Burma)

Ca. twelfth century, Pagan period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 24" W: 7" D: 5"

Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Elliott H. Eisman

The Buddha stands frontally and unflexed. His right hand is in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*), and his left hand holds a flap of his robe. He stands atop a double lotus pedestal that has two layers of petals in each row in a pattern standard in late Pāla art. However, in contrast to Pāla examples of this approximate date, these petals are flattened and do not curve so three-dimensionally.

The Buddha wears his robe so that both shoulders are covered. The robe clings to his body invisibly, except at the neck and as it falls at the sides of his body. While the treatment of the hem in the preceding image (cat. no. 63)

was animated and exuberant, this hem is flat and restrained, with the folds being suggested by an indentation at the hem on either side of the figure and by lightly incised triangular forms. The figure is more slender and elongated than the previous example, but the shape of the body is also clearly derived from a Pāla source, as may be seen particularly in the full thighs, narrow hips, and broad torso with its cow's face (*gomukha*) shape. The facial features are crisp and hardened and are reminiscent of the facial types popular in late Pāla art. However, the lobes of the ears seem especially elongated and the *ūrṇā* quite large compared with Pāla examples.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *The Sensuous Immortals: A Selection of Sculptures from the Pan-Asian Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, [1978?]), 156-157, no. 92.

65

#### BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA)

Myanmar (Burma)

Ca. sixteenth century (?)

Lacquered wood

H: 19 5/8" W: 10 1/4" D: 5"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of James and Beverly Coburn (M.78.129)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

The importance of Bodh Gayā to the Buddhists of Myanmar did not diminish after the Pagan period. Two centuries after the replica of the Mahābodhi Temple had been built at Pagan, another one, the Schwegugyi Temple, was built by a Myanmar king at Pegu in the mid-fifteenth century. In sculpture, the emphasis on Bodh Gayā also was preserved long after the Pāla period, for the subject of the Buddha in the earth-touching gesture became the most prevalent manner of showing the Buddha in Myanmar art and was repeated throughout the centuries.

Even in fairly late images, such as this splendid wooden example, the religious and artistic legacy of the Pāla tradition persists. The Myanmar emphasis on Bodh Gayā is evident in the subject matter, which depicts the Māravijaya scene, and the figure style, which reveals the ancestry of Pāla art in the broad-shouldered torso. However, the body forms have been simplified and abstracted, showing little of the volume, definition, and fleshiness of Pāla period prototypes. The delicate facial features, tight hair curls, downward-tilted head, and distinctive treatment of the hand with its flat fingers of equal length all demonstrate Myanmar developments

since the Pagan period, when much of Myanmar art had been closely modeled on Pāla prototypes.

The treatment of the pedestal reveals no relationship to Pāla art whatsoever in terms of its shape, motifs, or even the manner of carving, which is linear rather than sculptural. The Buddha's robe, particularly the flap over his left shoulder, is also created with linear rather than sculpted details. The lacquered wood technique, ultimately derived from China or the Chinese-influenced regions of Southeast Asia, does not have an Indic counterpart.

Because of a lack of comparable, securely dated examples, it is difficult to be certain of the date of this sculpture.

## 66 SĀCCHA WITH BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS

Myanmar (Burma)

Ca. eleventh century, Pagan period, reign of King Aniruddha

Molded clay

H: 5 3/8" W: 3 3/4" D: 5/8"

Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, Louis Sydney Thierry  
Memorial Fund (1981.34)

This *sāccha* is an example of a type produced during the reign of King Aniruddha of Myanmar (reigned ca. 1044-1077).<sup>1</sup> The Sanskrit inscription in the Nāgari script across the bottom not only records the name of the king as the donor, but identifies the object as a *sāccha*.<sup>2</sup> The lack of clarity of the inscription, particularly at the sides, and the softness of detail elsewhere in the plaque, such as along the upper edge and top right, suggest that this *sāccha* was produced from a well-used mold.

King Aniruddha, often remembered as the first great propagator of Buddhism in Myanmar, apparently created great numbers of clay *sāccha* as part of his efforts to spread the religion throughout his land. Examples of his clay plaques have been found throughout Myanmar, and several types of plaques distributed by King Aniruddha have been identified. These include a five-figure format, as seen in this example, as well as compositions containing ten, thirty-one, and fifty figures.<sup>3</sup> While the ultimate source for these Buddhist plaques was probably the Pāla region, King Aniruddha's plaques may also be indebted to the pre-Pagan period art of Myanmar.

The shape of this rimless tablet is a variation on what became a standard *sāccha* format, namely, a square base and curved sides that taper to a point at the top much like the shape of late Pāla stone stelae. The central subject is the Buddha-to-be in the earth-touching gesture seated within a temple, presumably the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh

Gayā. Sprays of leaves of the *bodhi* tree are shown at the sides of the temple. The decoration of the temple differs from Indic prototypes in the beadlike ornamentation of the pedestal and pillars and the triangular divisions of the pedestal, but the form is ultimately based on an Indic model. The central figure is strictly based on Pāla examples and does not show the downward tilt of the head, broad forehead, large head, and invisible neck that become characteristic of Pagan period Buddha images. His body is also fleshy rather than puffy, and the torso reveals a hint of the *gomukha* torso so popular in Pāla art.

Flanking the Buddha are two slightly smaller figures of Bodhisattvas seated atop double lotus pedestals that rise from stems below. Pillars at their sides and a halolike form around the figures suggest an abbreviated temple enclosure or simply may be schematic renderings of throne backs and halos. The Bodhisattvas lack distinguishable identifying characteristics, but they are probably Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, who sometimes attend the Buddha in the earth-touching gesture. The Bodhisattvas are symmetrically posed, each with the inner hand raised and displaying the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*) and the outer hand pointing downward and displaying the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*). The inner leg of each Bodhisattva is folded and rests on the double lotus seat while the outer leg is bent but extends downward in the posture of ease (*lalitāsana*).

Above the two Bodhisattvas are two additional depictions of Buddhas displaying the earth-touching gesture. These Buddhas are smaller than the two Bodhisattvas, conveying a sense of perspective and suggesting that the two Buddhas are further back than the Bodhisattvas. The Buddha on the left is surrounded by an arched enclosure that is embellished with beadlike decoration. The Buddha on the right may have been enclosed in a similar shrinelike unit, but the mold was apparently too worn by the time this clay plaque was made to provide a clear imprint.

In the sky, six small *stūpas*, three on either side of the tower of the central temple, and flowers appear amidst streamers issuing from the *stūpa*-like finial atop the temple.

1. See Gordon H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, Artibus Asiae Supplementum 25, 3 vols. (Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin Publisher for Artibus Asiae and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1969-1970), vol. 3, pl. 8a left and vol. 2, 4-5. The plaque type was also used by Queen Trilokavatāmsakā, wife of the later Myanmar king Kyanzittha. See Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 3, pl. 8c and vol. 2, 5. Queen Trilokavatāmsakā's plaques were larger than the Aniruddha type, measuring about six inches in height. The inscriptions on Queen Trilokavatāmsakā's plaques have been translated as: "This Blessed One was made by the great queen, Trilokavatāmsakā, with her own hands, for the sake of Deliverance." Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 2, 5.
2. Luce publishes a transliteration and translation of the inscription by Mon Bo Kay: *om. deyadharma'yam saccadānapatīh/ ma/hārāja śrī aniruddhadevasya; "This is the pious gift of the donor of truth, the great king Śrī Aniruddha the divine."* Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 2, 5.



The term *sacca* (or *sañca*, which is an alternative reading) puzzled Mon Bo Kay; however, it is clearly a reference to the object itself. Thus, *saccadānapatiḥ* is a reference to the donor of the gift (*dāna*) of the *sacca*.

3. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 17.

67

# SĀCCHA WITH THREE BUDDHAS IN ARCHITECTURAL SETTINGS

Myanmar (Burma)

Ca. eleventh century, Pagan period

Molded clay

H: 6 1/4" W: 5 1/2" D: 2 3/4"

Anonymous private collection

Although this plaque and other examples of its type are not known to be associated with a specific Myanmar king, there is little doubt that they are Myanmar and not Pāla in origin.<sup>1</sup> Numerous examples have been found at Odok Pagoda at Tagaung (Takoñ) and at Myoma Village in northern Prome District, although none has been recovered at Pagan.<sup>2</sup>

A Sanskrit inscription recording the Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1) is written across the bottom of the plaque in the Nāgari script. Although it has been argued that the use of Sanskrit and an Indic script indicates that such plaques were made in the Pāla lands, Myanmar kings such as Aniruddha are well known to have used Sanskrit and the Indic script on their plaques (cat. no. 66). Therefore, the language and script alone are not evidence for a non-Myanmar manufacture of these plaques.<sup>3</sup>

The tablet has a flat bottom, a rounded top, and a very deep rim (partially lost) within which the design has been impressed. The subject of the *sāccha* is three Buddhas, each contained within an archway. Twelve *stūpas* are represented in the sky above. The central Buddha's archway is crowned by a temple tower of the Mahābodhi Temple type. Since the central figure is a seated Buddha in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*), it is possible that this is a representation of the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā. The two Buddhas flanking the central figure are both standing. In each case, these Buddhas raise their inner hands to their chest while their outer hands hang at their sides. However, the gestures (*mudrās*) of the inner hands are not identical, for the Buddha at the right displays the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*) with his raised hand while the Buddha on the left holds his hand palm inward as if holding the end of his robe.

The iconography of this plaque and others of its type is puzzling. The subject has been identified as the "twin miracle,"<sup>4</sup> that is, the miracle at Śrāvastī, during which the Buddha created multiple images of himself, but it is highly

unlikely that this is what is represented. In such depictions, the Buddha is normally shown in a teaching gesture (*dharmacakra mudrā*) and the additional Buddhas are invariably shown seated rather than standing. Here, the earth-touching gesture of the central Buddha makes it virtually certain that the subject is the Māravijaya at Bodh Gayā. It may be suggested tentatively that the two Buddhas represent the activities of the second and third weeks following the Māravijaya, when the Buddha stood and gazed unblinkingly at the *bodhi* tree, and when he walked up and down a promenade near the tree, respectively. The central figure in the earth-touching gesture would also be a reference to the first week after the Māravijaya, which the Buddha passed in continued meditation under the *bodhi* tree. (For discussion of the post-enlightenment events, see cat. no. 61.)

In style, the figures are clearly derived from Pāla prototypes. Unlike examples of the Myanmar style of this approximate date (cat. no. 61), the figures lack distinctively Myanmar stylistic characteristics such as the large, downward-tilted heads and expansive foreheads.

1. For others of the type and related types, see Gordon H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 25, 3 vols. (Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin Publisher for Artibus Asiae and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1969-1970), vol. 3, pls. 56, 57a. Some confusion about whether the type is Pāla or Myanmar has apparently arisen because the example illustrated by Luce as pl. 57a left, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, has in recent times been attributed to Bodh Gayā. However, the accession number on the piece clearly refers to its findspot at Tagaung (Takoñ), a city north of Pagan.
2. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 174. I am unaware of whether any have been found at Pagan since the time of Luce's writing.
3. For discussion of this point, see Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 97-98.
4. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, vol. 1, 173-175; vol. 2, 46-47.

68

# SĀCCHA WITH ONE HUNDRED BUDDHAS

Myanmar (Burma)

Ca. twelfth century, Pagan period, reign of Alaungsithu(?)

Molded clay

H: 8 1/2" W: 5 1/2"

The Dayton Art Institute, Gift of Miss Louise Mellinger (55.54)

Illustrated in color

This rimmed plaque has a square bottom and tapers to a point at the top in the shape found typically in late Pāla period stelae. A space for an inscription along the bottom beneath the lowest row of figures has been left blank. However, the plaque is identical to examples of a well-known, inscribed "hundred Buddhas" type associated with Śrī Tribhuvanādityapavara that have been found at Pagan.<sup>1</sup> The grandson and successor of King Kyanzittha,

Śrī Tribhuvanādityapavara is better known as Alaungsithu (reigned ca. 1111-1167 or 1113-1169/70), although the more formal, royal title is used on the plaques.

One hundred seated Buddhas all in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) are arranged in ten horizontal rows. The lowest seven rows each has eleven Buddhas, the next two rows each has nine Buddhas, and the uppermost row has five Buddhas. Two *stūpas*, one at each end, occur in the eighth and tenth rows. It is likely that the inclusion of the *stūpas* here is intended to fill the spaces that occur at the sides as the number of Buddhas diminish in the upper rows. Because of the tapered shape of the plaque, *stūpas* did not need to be added in the ninth row. At the top of the design is a *chattra* (umbrella), beneath which are sprays of *bodhi* tree leaves.

The hundred Buddhas are identical in pose, costume, hand gesture, and sitting posture. Each is seated upon a double lotus pedestal and is enclosed within an arched niche. However, while the shape of these niches is unvaried, two designs are used for the arched niches. In one, the arches are made of beadlike elements, and in the other, the arches have an outer beaded edge and an inner edge made of a raised line. The two types of arches are alternated for the Buddhas in each row. Further, consecutive rows do not begin with the same arch type, thus creating a staggered arrangement of the types on the plaque.

1. For examples see Gordon H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 25, 3 vols. (Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin Publisher for Artibus Asiae and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1969-1970), vol. 3, pls. 18a-18b, 19a, and 19c. See vol. 2, 13-14 for the inscriptions.

69

# BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA)

Northern Thailand

Ca. late fifteenth or early sixteenth century

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 24 1/2" W: 21 1/2" D: 11"

Courtesy of Denver Art Museum, Gift in Memory of  
Irene Littledale Downs (1986.161)

Unlike Pāla depictions of the Māravijaya scene, which generally are richly arrayed with subsidiary elements, such as a *bodhi* tree, a halo, attendant figures, and a throne back, this example and other Thai images of the type show only the figure of the Buddha-to-be.<sup>1</sup> Like his Indic counterparts, the figure sits with his legs folded in the lotus position (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*). His right hand is in the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*), and his left hand rests palm upward in his lap.

This image represents a popular type produced in northern Thailand during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although ultimately derived from a Pāla model, images of this type are many generations removed from their Pāla ancestors. The origin of the type and the explanation of its ties to Pāla art are controversial issues. Because of their resemblance to Pāla sculptures, the images at first were thought to have been produced around the time of the late Pāla period or shortly thereafter, that is, around the twelfth or thirteenth century. Specifically, it was theorized that the Pāla tradition may have been passed on to northern Thailand through Myanmar (Burma) before 1287, when Pagan was overwhelmed by the Mongols. Some scholars also associated the images with King Mengrai, who is believed to have imported artists from Pagan in around 1290. After capturing Lamphun in 1292, King Mengrai founded a new capital nearby at Chiangmai, where, it is presumed, Pāla influence as it had been transformed by artists of Pagan was felt in the art. King Mengrai's kingdom, called Lanna (A Million Rice Fields), soon grew to include much of northern Thailand. Since many images of the type were found at Chiangsaen, where King Mengrai is believed to have lived, the images are sometimes said to be in the Chiangsaen style.

In the 1950s, a noted scholar of Thai art, Alexander Griswold, made a remarkable discovery. By studying a series of inscribed, dated images, he was able to determine that many if not all of the "Pāla style" images of northern Thailand were in fact produced much later than the twelfth or thirteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the images Griswold studied ranged from the late fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth century (1470 to 1565). The present image may be suggested to date from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, based on comparisons with the dated images presented by Griswold.

The lateness of the images raised many questions, particularly regarding the apparently lengthy gap between the demise of the Pāla idiom in India and Bangladesh in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and the popularity of the image type in Thailand in the late fifteenth century. Griswold theorized that the inception of the image type could be linked to King Tiloka (reigned 1441-1487), who is renowned in Thai history for having planted a *bodhi* tree cutting and erecting a replica of the Mahābodhi Temple near Chiangmai. King Tiloka's temple, which he called Mahābodhārāma (Monastery of Mahābodhi), was constructed between 1455 and 1470 and is known today as Wat Chedi Chet Yot. The question of where the king obtained his plans and model for the temple has been debated, but there is evidence that he may have sent a mission of craftsmen and artists to Bodh Gayā to study the original site. Griswold hypothesized that while there the artists might have seen or made a model of the main image of the temple and thus introduced the type to northern

Thailand upon their return. Griswold believed that the main image at the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā was known as the "Lion of the Śākyas"<sup>3</sup> and on that basis gave the name "Lion Type" to the Thai images, replacing the former designation of the Early Chiangsaen style. Griswold concluded that the image type must have been introduced into northern Thailand between 1455, when work on the Wat Chedi Chet Yot began, and 1470, the date of the earliest of the "Lion Type" images that he studied.<sup>4</sup>

Since it is not certain that King Tiloka sent a mission to Bodh Gayā, it cannot be confirmed that the artistic source for the late fifteenth-century images was a direct Pāla model. It is interesting that about the same time, or shortly after the time, that King Tiloka was building his copy of the Mahābodhi Temple, the Mon King Dhammaceti of Pegu in Lower Myanmar (Burma) sent an expedition to Bodh Gayā to insure the accuracy of the replica of the Mahābodhi Temple that he was building at his own capital. Both structures included replicas of the seven stations where the events of the seven weeks that followed the Buddha's enlightenment occurred. Although it is unknown whether these places at Bodh Gayā were important during Pāla times, emphasis on them in the Myanmar tradition occurs in Pagan period art and later, suggesting a possible connection between King Tiloka's temple in Thailand and the Myanmar tradition. (For the seven stations in Myanmar art, see cat. nos. 61 and 62.)

Regardless of whether King Tiloka introduced the Māravijaya type for the first time, or whether there had been a tradition of earlier images, perhaps resulting from direct contacts with the Pāla world or with Pagan, there is little doubt that the image type became especially popular around the time of King Tiloka's reign. The key problem then is to determine why King Tiloka placed such great emphasis on the Mahābodhi Temple and Māravijaya theme. Although this problem needs extensive study, it may be suggested that King Tiloka's emphasis may partially reflect the way the symbolism of the site relates to ideas of kingship and rulership over the earth.<sup>5</sup>

Before the images and their relationships with both Pāla and Thai art can be understood, their ties to earlier schools of art in northern Thailand also must be examined. Although little remains of the art of Haripuñjaya at Lamphun to provide answers, it is possible that the earlier art traditions had some role in the formulation of the late fifteenth-century images. Some scholars have questioned the suggestion of the Pāla affiliation at all, seeing instead influence from other Indic schools of art, such as Orissa. Until these and other questions are answered, even the terminology to be used for such images remains controversial.

The stylistic and iconographic features of this image conform closely to the description of the "Lion Type" first provided by Griswold and subsequently reiterated and

refined by others. The image always represents the Māravijaya scene, with the Buddha-to-be in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* and *vajraparyāṅkāsaṇa*. The face is a rounded oval. The shoulders are broad, the chest is massive and somewhat corpulent, and the body is fleshy, particularly across the abdomen. The body is somewhat stiff and the chest seems to be thrust forward. The figure is graceful but heavy. The drapery, an important feature for determining stylistic and iconographic associations in Thai Art, is of the "open" type in which the right shoulder is bare.<sup>6</sup> The flap of cloth over the left shoulder, while ending in the same kind of notched design seen in other idioms of Thai art, stops just above the nipple, contrasting for example with the Sukhothai form in which the flap reaches to the waist.<sup>7</sup> The finial atop the *uṣṇīṣa* has been lost and only a round receptacle remains at the top. However, it is likely that the insert would have been a smooth knob in form of jewel.<sup>8</sup> The heavy, large curls of hair are also distinctive, as are the pronounced facial features. The figure sits upon a plain base that once may have rested on a lotus pedestal.

While the Māravijaya image is always inherently a reference to Bodh Gayā and the events that occurred there, there is nothing about the Thai images to confirm that Bodh Gayā was the source for the style. Indeed, it is difficult to determine which of the Pāla styles might have been the source for the northern Thai images.<sup>9</sup> Transformed through the centuries of distance from the Pāla style, probably modified by intermediaries, and produced by artists who are likely to have had well-established methods of creating their own works, the images echo their Pāla forebears but are distinctively Thai.

1. Forrest McGill suggests that in Thailand the figure was probably considered to be a Buddha rather than a Buddha-to-be. Personal communication.
2. Alexander B. Griswold, *Dated Buddha Images of Northern Siam* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1957).
3. There is no evidence that this was the case during Pāla times or at any time in Indian history.
4. Griswold presumed that under Tiloka's heretic father important Buddhist images were not made. However, many scholars today believe that while Tiloka's program may have stimulated the popularity of the image type, there were earlier, perhaps undated, images produced during the fourteenth century and perhaps earlier.
5. See introduction to the Pāla period for discussion of the Māravijaya theme in relation to the Pāla kings.
6. For the drapery style, see Alexander B. Griswold, "Prologomena to the Study of the Buddha's Dress in Chinese Sculpture," *Artibus Asiae* 26 (1963), 86-91.
7. The Sukhothai form is probably based on prototypes from south Indian sites, such as Kāñcīpuram and Nāgapaṭṭinam, and from Sri Lanka. For examples with the long flap from Nāgapaṭṭinam, see T. N. Ramachandran, *The Nāgapaṭṭinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum*, Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, New Series, General Section 7, no. 1 (Madras: Director of Stationary and Printing, Madras, on Behalf of the Government of Madras, 1965), pl. 2, fig. 3; pl. 3, and pl. 4, figs. 1 and 4.
8. This element is sometimes mistakenly referred to as a lotus bud. I am grateful to Forrest McGill for clarifying this issue for me.
9. Among the images in this exhibition showing the Māravijaya scene, the one that is most closely related to the Thai sculpture is cat. no. 29, which was probably produced in northern Bengal during the eleventh century.

## A BUDDHIST GODDESS

Indonesia, Java

Ca. eighth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 6 1/4" W: 6 1/4" D: 2 1/4"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.84)

The identification of this eight-armed goddess is uncertain due to the fact that most of her attributes are broken off. Her upper right hand holds a *vajra*, her lower right hand makes a gesture of offering but the object it once held is unclear, and her lower left hand holds what appears to be a fruit. Only stubs remain of the other attributes, precluding their identification.

The goddess's legs are folded in the lotus position (*padmāsana*). It is likely that the figure was once placed atop a lotus pedestal, which in turn may have rested on another type of base. The body of the goddess is slender and attenuated, yet she is also endowed with a fleshy abdomen and full, round breasts. Her shoulders are broad and her waist is extremely narrow, giving her body a marked shapeliness. Her face is dominated by her large facial features. The goddess wears a low-waisted lower garment and a sash across her breasts. The lower garment apparently was originally decorated with a textile pattern, but the metal surface has deteriorated over the centuries, leaving the design indistinct. Her jewelry is simple, consisting of a single necklace made of beadlike elements, armlets, an ornamented belt, and earrings. Her coiffure is complicated and high, consisting of a large, central bun ornamented with a jewelled crest and diadem.

The figure, facial features, clothing, and ornamentation are closely related to early Pāla metal images of the eighth century.<sup>1</sup> Since related examples have been found at a number of sites in the Pāla lands, it is difficult to determine a precise Pāla source for the work. However, its resemblance to metal images from the Bengal region suggests associations with the Bengali traditions.

## PUBLISHED:

The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 40.

1. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pala-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 26.

## JAMBHALA OR KUBERA

Indonesia, Java

Ca. ninth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 3 15/16"

Society of Friends of Asiatic Art on loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (MAK 1201, 1970)

The god of wealth, who may be either the Buddhist Jambhala or the Hindu Kubera, is recognized by his portly, potbellied appearance; the wish-granting gem (*cintāmaṇi*)<sup>1</sup> he holds in his gift-bestowing right hand; and the purse overflowing with gems (*maṇi* or *ratna*) he holds in his left. Since both Jambhala and Kubera may be depicted in this identical form, it is impossible to determine which deity is intended without the presence of additional identifying features.<sup>2</sup>

The wish-granting gem offered by the god symbolizes wealth and prosperity. The purse, which contains the god's treasure, is made of the skin of a mongoose and is called *nakulaka* after the Sanskrit word for mongoose (*nakula*). Sometimes it is a gem-spewing mongoose that serves as the god's purse.<sup>3</sup> In Indic literature, the mongoose is said to be the receptacle of all jewels. The natural enemy of snakes, the mongoose is said to have wrested the gems from the serpent guardians of the jewel treasures lying beneath the earth.<sup>4</sup>

The deity's legs are in the posture of ease (*lalitāsana*), with his left leg tucked up on his lotus pedestal and his right hanging down. The footstool against which his right foot rests is an overflowing pot of treasures, from which issues a garland of gems. Additional pots also overspilling with strands of gems adorn the rectangular base upon which the lotus pedestal rests. Befitting his nature as a wealth deity, the figure is richly adorned with jewelry and a decorated crown.

As precious, rare, and beautiful objects, jewels have a wide range of symbolic meanings in Indic culture. On the simplest level, gems signify material well-being, including not only the possession of wealth and health but happiness as well. Sometimes associated with magical properties, gems were thought to grant victory and cure wounds and from an early date were used as protective amulets.<sup>5</sup> In the Buddhist context, gems represent the most precious treasure of all—the Buddhist Dharma. Therefore, while on the mundane level the worship of Jambhala is believed to provide the devotee with material well-being, on the esoteric level the treasure Jambhala offers is the totality of the Buddhist teachings. In Hinduism, an esoteric meaning also may be implicit.

The emphasis on Jambhala/Kubera in Javanese imagery, attested by the survival of many examples, is striking, particularly because these deities of wealth are



not commonly depicted in the Pāla repertoire. The popularity of a wealth god in Javanese art and culture may derive from a source elsewhere in the Indic world or may reflect the popularization of a minor deity in Pāla culture that had great appeal to the Javanese. In light of the flourishing commercial empires of Southeast Asia and the role the region played in the international trade of the period, it is not difficult to imagine why a deity of prosperity would have such appeal.

Numerous elements in this image indicate the originality of the Javanese artists and their freedom from Indic models. The lotus pedestal upon which the figure sits has sharply pointed petals that project outward almost horizontally, in contrast to the upturned Pāla treatment; the lower petals lay virtually flat on the top of the rectangular base. Further, the contours of the petals were created by the artist carving into the wax model from which the image was cast, whereas in typical Pāla metal images the lotuses and other elements are created sculpturally. The result is a form that is heavier and an edge that is more sharply delineated than those seen in Indic examples. The treatment of the throne back and halo also differs from Indic models. In Pāla examples (e.g., cat. nos. 13-16), the throne back is generally square and the halo rounded and there is a sharp delineation between them. However, here the two forms are unified into a single form with an unusual shape. Instead of being framed by the rounded halo, the head of the deity is flanked by the triangular sections that represent the crossbar of the throne with its *makara* ends. The decoration of the outer edge of the throne-cum-halo is indistinct, for the artist has used generalized *prabhā*-like rays but has not defined them clearly.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 86, cat. no. 34.

1. This object is sometimes identified as a citron (*mātulūṅga* or *jambhīra*). It has been suggested that the citron was used to make a type of liquor and may be associated with a wine-drinking aspect of Jambhala. See Bhagwant Sahai, *Iconography of Minor Hindu and Buddhist Deities* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1975), 224. However, this would not explain the association of the citron with numerous deities beside Jambhala. Further, while there may have been some connection between Jambhala and wine drinking during Kuṣāṇa times (second and third centuries A.D.), wine drinking was never a major emphasis in the deity's symbolism.
2. Probably stemming from a common source early in the Indic religious development, Jambhala and Kubera are closely related deities. Each has a number of functions, forms, and names, many of which are distinctive and can be identified clearly as belonging to one or the other. However, the iconography of some forms is identical, as in this example, making it

impossible to know if the image was intended for a Buddhist or Hindu context.

3. Sahai assumes that the mongoose is more characteristic of Jambhala and the bag more typical of Kubera. See Sahai, *Iconography of Minor Hindu and Buddhist Deities*, 59-72, for discussion of Kubera and 223-230 for discussion of Jambhala in which this assumption is made. However, this distinction does not seem to be confirmed by artistic and literary sources.
4. Sahai, *Iconography of Minor Hindu and Buddhist Deities*, 223.
5. Liebert, *Iconographic Dictionary of the Indian Religions*, 169.

72

#### BUDDHA (PROBABLY MAITREYA)

Indonesia, Java

Ca. ninth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 14 5/8"

Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde,  
Leiden, The Netherlands (RMV 1403-2844)

Shown in Dayton and Baltimore

The Buddha sits on a throne with his legs pendant in a posture commonly known as *pralambapadāsana* (hanging feet posture), but which is more properly called *bhadrāsana* (auspicious seat), as may be inferred from Buddhist texts. His hands are together in a gesture of teaching called *dharmacakra mudrā* (law-wheel gesture). He is garbed in a robe that clings smoothly and invisibly to his body except at the hem and between his legs, where it falls across the seat of his throne.

This Buddha is probably Maitreya, the future Buddha, and not Śākyamuni. Because Mahāyāna Buddhists believe that the lives and careers of Śākyamuni and Maitreya are identical, it is often difficult to distinguish the two Buddhas in art. However, the pendant leg posture is particularly associated with Maitreya, as may be inferred from images that are unequivocally representations of him and not Śākyamuni.<sup>1</sup> The Buddha of the next age, Maitreya is destined to succeed Śākyamuni as the last in a series of mortal (Mānuṣi) Buddhas. Maitreya currently resides as a Bodhisattva in Tuṣita heaven awaiting his final rebirth. In art, Maitreya may be shown in his Tuṣita form as a Bodhisattva (cat. nos. 5 and 49) or as a Buddha presiding over the earthly realm known as Ketumatī, as in this example. The heir apparent to Śākyamuni, Maitreya is the focus of a significant cult within Buddhism.

Although highly reminiscent of Pāla period metal works in its overall configuration,<sup>2</sup> particularly the treatment of the throne and halo, this image does not have an exact counterpart in the repertoire of surviving images from the Pāla domains. The Buddha's delicate facial features suggest ties with the Indian schools of Buddhist art that flourished in Orissa, at sites such as Ratnagiri and Lalitagiri, or in the Deccan region, as at Ellora, suggesting that the work reflects an amalgamation of Indic stylistic

sources. Other features are likely to reflect already well established artistic modes in Java. However, the artistry of this magnificent image goes far beyond the mere amalgamation of these separate artistic sources, for it represents a pinnacle of Javanese artistic expression.

The Buddha sits atop an imposing throne, much more grand in scale than the typical Pāla throne. Its high pedestal has a central projecting bay, but the proportions are unlike Pāla examples. In a typical Pāla *triratha* pedestal, the central bay is about one-third the width of the pedestal, but this central projection is expansive, extending nearly the full width of the base. On the front of the projection, a pair of reclining deer face a central, four-spoked wheel. Although usually interpreted as a reference to the first sermon of Śākyamuni Buddha, the deer and wheel are equally appropriate for an image of Maitreya, whose first sermon is yet to be given. In Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism, the deer-and-wheel motif is also symbolic of the Buddhist teachings (Dharma) as a whole. Unlike the typical wheel of Pāla art, which has eight spokes and is surrounded by light rays (*prabhā*) that rise to a point at the top (cat. no. 19), this wheel has four spokes and is perfectly circular. Lions atop elephants, a common motif on Indic thrones, appear at the corners of the front projection, and seated, front-facing lions occur at the rear, all rendered in a very detailed, three-dimensional manner. The crossbars of the throne extend to a width approximately equal to that of the seat back, providing a dramatic backdrop for the central figure. The ornamentation above the crossbars has been lost, but below, at the sides of the throne, rampant lions stand atop dwarves who in turn stand upon elephants. While rampant lions atop elephants are a common element of Pāla throne backs, the addition of the dwarves may derive from another Indic source. Unlike the usual Pāla rampant lions, which face forward (e.g., cat. nos. 16, 17, 23, 44), these lions look back over their shoulders. A four-petalled flower at the right of the throne near the Buddha's left knee is an unusual feature in throne iconography; it is likely that a similar flower at the left once balanced the composition.

The circular halo surrounding the Buddha's head is solid and has a series of concentric designs around the rim that are related to a type that appears in Pāla metal images from Jhewāri in southeastern Bengal around the ninth century.<sup>3</sup> The outer edge of the halo originally had rays encircling it, as may be determined by the ones remaining along the bottom. Slightly more elongated than the rays usually seen in Pāla halos, the forms nonetheless probably derive from a Pāla source. An umbrella (*chattra*) rising from the ornamentation at the top of the halo originally served as a finial.

The Buddha's lotus footstool differs from Pāla examples in its flatness and the simplicity of its stalks. The lotus petals of the pedestal upon which the Buddha sits

relates to Pāla models in the upturned ends of the petals, although the shape is not precisely like Pāla examples.

The originality and technical mastery already possessed by Javanese artists at the time this image was made is remarkable, especially considering the fact that the Pāla artistic tradition was still in its fledgling stage at the time. Not solely dependent upon inspiration derived from the Pāla lands, the Javanese artists did not slavishly adopt the Pāla idiom. Instead, the essence of Pāla art was united with the already well established artistic schools and competed with influences from other areas of India as well.

#### PUBLISHED:

H. H. Juynboll, *Catalogus van 's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum 5: Javaansche Oudheden* (Leiden: 1909), 89, pl. 12, fig. 2; A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 41, pl. 62; David L. Snellgrove, ed., *The Image of the Buddha* (Paris and Tokyo: UNESCO, 1978), 158, fig. 111; P. L. F. van Dongen, Matthi Forrer, and Willem R. van Gulik, eds., *Masterpieces from the National Museum of Ethnology* (Leiden: 1987), pl. 48; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 76, cat. no. 24; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientations* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 37, fig. 13.

1. This image is often compared to a representation of a Buddha also seated in *bhadrāsana* at Caṇḍi Mendut in Java. That Buddha is flanked by representations of the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi, thereby confirming his identification as Vairocana, as has been established by previous scholars. However, the *bhadrāsana* posture further indicates that the Caṇḍi Mendut Buddha is also Maitreya, making his full identification Vairocana/Maitreya. The present image is not attended by the identifying Bodhisattvas, and therefore it is impossible to know whether he is Maitreya alone or Vairocana/Maitreya.
2. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 167.
3. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 256.

Indonesia, Java

Ca. ninth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 8 1/4"

Society of Friends of Asiatic Art on loan to the  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (MAK 389, 1940)

The Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī sits atop a double lotus pedestal in a posture of royal ease (*mahārājalīlāsana*), with his left leg folded up and resting on the seat and the right leg raised with the foot flat on the pedestal. He leans against his left arm and his right arm rests on his right knee. From his left hand issues one of his characteristic attributes, a blue lotus (*nīlotpala*), which rises to a height just above his left shoulder. Atop the lotus is another of Mañjuśrī's symbols, a book (*pustaka*), representative of his role as an embodiment of transcendent wisdom. The book is so clearly portrayed that even the cord used to bind it together is depicted. The Bodhisattva's right hand is partially closed, and his index finger and thumb form a circle. Behind him is a large circular aura that is plain and solid in the center, but has a raised rim with an inner bead motif and an outer *prabhā* (light) motif. A finial at the top center of the aura is broken off, but probably held an umbrella (*chattra*).

Mañjuśrī is adorned with the jewelry of a Bodhisattva, including a necklace, earrings, armbands, anklets, and a diadem. His lower garment is incised with a textile design of circles, possibly reflecting a fashion of the ninth century, when this image was made. Mañjuśrī's coiffure consists of a high knot of matted hair (*jaṭā*) in the center and two small locks at the sides of his head.

The close resemblance between this image and ninth-century examples from the Pāla kingdom is extraordinary. In particular, the image may be compared with works from Nālandā. Contacts between the Indonesian region and Nālandā during the ninth century are documented by a well-known copperplate inscription found at Nālandā dated in the thirty-ninth regnal year of King Devapāla (ca. 850) that records a gift to an establishment at Nālandā by King Bālaputradeva of Sumatra.<sup>1</sup> Numerous features of the work resemble the style prevalent at Nālandā around that time, including the shape and proportions of the Bodhisattva's body, the pointed, smooth lotus petals, and the treatment of the edge of the halo with its beaded rim and pointed, flamelike edge.<sup>2</sup>

However, in spite of the striking affinities with Pāla metal images, it is clear from several features that the work is Javanese and not Indic in origin. These include technical details as well as motifs and designs that are unexpected or uncommon in the Pāla repertoire. While the Javanese artists often copied the shapes and forms used in Pāla art,

they apparently used their own preferred techniques to achieve them. For example, while the lotus petals of the Bodhisattva's pedestal are slightly more rectilinear than the usual ninth-century Pāla type, they clearly approximate the Pāla form (compare with cat. no. 45). However, while Pāla artists almost invariably hand-modeled the wax forms from which the metal images were cast to create these almost heart-shaped petals, the Javanese rendition was apparently created through the use of a tool to carve a crisp edge (see also cat. nos. 71, 75, and 78 for lotuses with sharply carved edges).

A number of motifs and elements in the composition also suggest Javanese rather than Pāla manufacture. Although the Bodhisattva is seated atop a double lotus pedestal of the type found commonly in ninth-century Pāla metal images at sites like Nālandā, it rests atop a solid rectangular pedestal. While solid rectangular pedestals occur in the Pāla artistic repertoire, they are the exception rather than the rule. Metal images generally have pedestals that are footed and are articulated into the *ratha* convention.<sup>3</sup> Often, small metal images show the deity seated atop a lotus pedestal that rises from a narrow rim or has no other base at all.<sup>4</sup> When solid pedestals are used,<sup>5</sup> they generally have some horizontal articulation and do not rest on a very wide bottom like that seen in this image. The solid treatment of the halo is also more characteristically Javanese than Pāla. Although examples of solid halos are known in the ninth-century Pāla schools,<sup>6</sup> the preponderance of works have a central opening in the halo.<sup>7</sup>

Other details that seem to be characteristic of the Javanese rather than Pāla style include the facial features, which, while softened over the centuries, appear to have been less pronounced than the usual Pāla type. The blue lotus, which is depicted as a fanlike form, also differs from Indic examples, but whether this reflects a Javanese convention is unknown. The Bodhisattva's jewelry is also likely to reflect local Javanese tastes, as seen especially in the solid, disklike earrings.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed., *Asiatic Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Landshoff in cooperation with the Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst and the Rijksmuseum, 1985), 174, no. 186; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 73, no. 21.

1. See above, "The Pāla Legacy Abroad: The Transmission to Southeast Asia and Southern China," for discussion and references.

2. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 164-166.
3. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 164-166; for footed examples of about the same date. See figs. 181-183 for examples of a slightly later date that show footed pedestals along with the *ratha* convention.
4. See S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 257 and 260, for examples from eastern Bengal of the same approximate date as this image.
5. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 258.
6. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 169, 257.
7. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 164.

74

# MAÑJUŚRĪ (SITA MAÑJUGHOṢA)

Reportedly found in Thailand, Khong District, Khorat (Nakhon Ratchasima) Province, but probably made in Indonesia, Java

Ca. ninth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 12 1/4" W: 6 1/8" D: 5 1/8"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.82)

The Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī sits atop a double lotus pedestal in *lalitāsana*, with his left leg folded onto his lotus seat and the right leg pendant. His right hand displays the gift-bestowal gesture (*varada mudrā*), thereby identifying him as the form of Mañjuśrī known as Sita Mañjughoṣa. His left hand holds the stem of a lotus flower that rises beside him. Although the details of the lotus are unclear, it is probably a blue lotus (*nilotpala*), a standard emblem of this Bodhisattva. A book (*pustaka*), emblematic of Mañjuśrī's role as an embodiment of transcendent wisdom, rests atop the lotus. Rising vertically from the book is Mañjuśrī's sword, the weapon with which this Bodhisattva of wisdom vanquishes ignorance.

Mañjuśrī leans in an accentuated posture to his right. His shoulders are broad, his waist is narrow, and his limbs are slender and graceful. His facial features, though worn, are delicate. He is adorned with a conical coiffure that is dressed with a highly ornamented crown bearing representations of five meditating Buddhas. In spite of the fact that the Buddhas are not differentiated by their hand gestures, they are undoubtedly the five Jina Buddhas. Symbolizing the five transcendent insights, the Jinās are especially appropriate adorning the headdress of the Bodhisattva of wisdom, although all Bodhisattvas are implicitly adorned this way in their esoteric forms.

The pedestal bears very three-dimensionally rendered lions at the corners. Although lions are a standard element in Buddhist thrones and pedestals, the lion is also the vehicle (*vāhana*) of Mañjuśrī. Therefore, the lions may serve a dual function here. Although not clothlike in its appearance, a half-circular form on the front of the pedestal probably represents drapery hung from the Bodhisattva's

throne, as may be inferred from more naturalistically rendered counterparts in Indic images.<sup>1</sup>

Behind the Bodhisattva is a circular aura (*prabhāmaṇḍala*). Originally solid in the manner apparently preferred by Javanese artisans, the halo has been damaged and part of the central section has been lost. The edge of the aura is rimmed with concentric circular forms, a row of beads, and an outer row of alternating beads and rays in a pattern closely modeled after Indic prototypes. From the top center of the aura rises a stem that holds the crowning umbrella (*chattra*) and its streamers.

This image was reportedly found in Thailand, Khong District, Khorat (Nakhon Ratchasima) Province, but it is unlikely that it was a product of a Thai school of metal imagery.<sup>2</sup> Instead, the work is likely to have been made in Java,<sup>3</sup> although when and how it was transported to Thailand is unknown.<sup>4</sup> Given the brisk trade and extensive international travel in Southeast Asia around the time this image was made, it could have been transported easily from its place of manufacture to a distant land. However, it is also possible that the image made its journey in more recent times.

A ninth-century date for the creation of the image may be suggested on the basis of its resemblance to Pāla period images that are securely dated. Features like the pointed, smooth lotus petals and the treatment of the rim of the halo with beaded forms and intermittent rays are generic to metal images from a number of eighth- and ninth-century Pāla sites. The pedestal is strikingly similar to a type found on images from Maināmatī in Chittagong (formerly Comilla) District of Bangladesh,<sup>5</sup> suggesting stylistic connections with this region of ancient Bengal. The extremely accentuated posture of the figure is unusual for Pāla images of this date and may reflect a local stylistic convention.

PUBLISHED:

M. R. Thanphong, *Pramuan phap pratima (A Collection of Sculptures). A Collection of Sculptures Published by M. R. Thanphong Kritdakon on the Occasion of the Cremation of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat* (Bangkok: 1964), pl. 2 [In Thai; a second edition entitled *A Collection of Sculptures* in English and Thai published in 1965 did not include this image]; Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd* (New York: The Asia Society, Inc., 1970), 41, 44-45, cat. no. 27; [The Connoisseur, ed.], "Studying Asian Art with Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd," *The Connoisseur* (Nov. 1970), 198-200, fig. 6; Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "History of Art: Accomplishments and Opportunities, Hopes and Fears," in Eliezer B. Ayal, ed., *The Study of Thailand: Analyses of Knowledge, Approaches, and Prospects in Anthropology, Art History, Economics,*



*History, and Political Science* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program, 1978), 97 n. 32; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 40; Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "Interrelations in a Group of South-East Asian Sculptures," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 382, fig. 6; Donald S. Lopez, Jr., and Steven C. Rockefeller, *Images of the Christ and the Bodhisattva* (Middlebury, Vermont: The Christian A. Johnson Memorial Gallery of Middlebury College, 1984), no. 40.

1. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 253.
2. Dr. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., has pointed out how the piece might fit into the broader picture of Thai art if indeed it were made there. See Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "Interrelations in a Group of South-East Asian Sculptures," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 382.
3. Woodward has suggested possible connections between this work and what is now considered to be the late eighth-century (A.D. 782) establishment of Caṇḍi Sewu in Java. He proposes that the central image of Caṇḍi Sewu may have resembled the Asia Society piece. See Woodward, "Interrelations in a Group of South-East Asian Sculptures," 382.
4. If the piece travelled to Thailand soon after its manufacture, it may have had some influence on Thai art. See Woodward, "Interrelations in a Group of South-East Asian Sculptures," 382.
5. For comparison, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 253.

75

## A BODHISATTVA

Indonesia, Java

Ca. ninth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 4 1/2" W: 2 3/4" D: 2 1/4"

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the Kronos Collection, 1984 (1984.486.1)

Although there is little doubt that this figure represents a Bodhisattva, the absence of identifying attributes and the unusual posture and hand gestures make it difficult to confirm his identity. It has been suggested that the figure represents a form of the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, although this is not conclusive.<sup>1</sup>

The figure sits in an alert rather than relaxed position atop a double lotus pedestal. His left leg is raised so that the sole of the foot rests squarely on the lotus. His right leg extends down, almost seeming to push against rather than rest upon a lotus footstool that rises from a thick stem in front of the rectangular platform below.<sup>2</sup> The Bodhisattva's body is tensed and his head is tilted to the side. His expressive hands gesture simultaneously, as if the Bodhisattva is involved in an animated conversation or discourse. Adorned with complicated, heavy jewelry and a tall, conical crown, the figure conveys a sense of royal authority belying the tiny scale of the image.

The well-defined facial features recall Nālandā metal works of about the ninth century, suggesting some inspiration from the Pāla school. However, the plain, solid, rectangular pedestal is more typically Javanese. The thick lotus petals have a carved edge, reflecting what was apparently a Javanese preference for using a tool to define the edge of the petals, in contrast to the hand-modeled edge preferred by the Pāla artists.

Exuding a sense of life, this miniature figure represents Javanese metal work at its finest.

PUBLISHED:

Martin Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from The Kronos Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 118-119, no. 44.

1. The identification was made by J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw in a report she wrote for a previous owner of the piece. See Martin Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from The Kronos Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 118.
2. For a similar stem, see A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pl. 164.

76

## GAṆEŚA

Indonesia, Java

Ca. ninth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 11"

Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, The Netherlands (RMV 1403-1876, 1849)

For Gaṇeśa's iconography, see cat. no. 21.

Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed god, was especially favored in Java, as may be inferred from the frequency with which depictions of this auspicious god appear in Javanese imagery. Adorned with jewelry and a crown, Gaṇeśa sits in a posture of royal ease (*mahārājalīlāsana*) atop a cushion that rests on a high, complicated throne. His left leg is folded up and rests flat on his seat. His right leg is supported by a meditation band (*yogapaṭṭa*), with the knee up and the sole of the foot flat on the seat. He is four-armed and holds a string of recitation beads (*akṣamālā*) in his upper right hand and a trident or trident-topped object, perhaps his characteristic axe (*kuṭhāra*), in his upper left. His lower left hand holds a bowl of sweetmeats (*modaka* or *laḍḍu*), which the god apparently finds irresistible, for he reaches into the bowl with his trunk. His lower right hand holds a radish (*mūlaka*), one of Gaṇeśa's characteristic attributes. Gaṇeśa's vehicle, the rat or mouse (*ākhu* or *mūṣaka*), is depicted directly beneath him on the pedestal.

Approximately one-third the height of the image, the pedestal of the throne is an important visual element in the composition. The lower portion is in the typical Pāla *triratha* format, above which is an open section linked to the seat by a pair of lion-atop-elephant atlantids. The square throne back is solid and has crossbars above decorated with *makaras*. Unlike typical Pāla examples, the crossbars do not extend beyond the width of the throne back. Behind Gaṇeśa's head is a large, round halo. Edged with a similar series of designs as the throne back, the halo and throne back are visually unified. Above the halo is an umbrella (*chattra*), to which streamers are attached.

The stylistic associations between this image and works from southeastern Bengal are striking. The distinctive pedestal, the edging motif of the throne back and halo, and the configuration of the umbrella and streamers above are all features found in the art of southeastern Bengal, particularly metal images from Maināmati in Chittagong (formerly Comilla) District of Bangladesh.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the time that the art of southeastern Bengal was known, the strong artistic and inscriptional evidence linking Java with Nālandā in Bihar (see cat. no. 73) led scholars to emphasize Nālandā as a source for Javanese art. However, images such as this demonstrate the vital role played by southeastern Bengal in the complex international relations at the time of the Pāla empire. A region noted for its many seaports linking the eastern Gangetic region with Southeast Asia, southeastern Bengal was not merely a gateway for foreigners travelling to Nālandā and other renowned religious centers in the Pāla heartland. The region was itself the home of flourishing ateliers of metal craftsmen, particularly during the eighth and ninth centuries, when the Javanese were at the height of their attraction to Pāla culture.<sup>2</sup> That these ateliers left their legacy in the metal images of Java is therefore not surprising.

#### PUBLISHED:

H. H. Juynboll, *Catalogus van 's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum 5: Javaansche Oudheden* (Leiden: 1909), 71, pl. 10, fig. 2; Alice Getty, *Gaṇeśa: A Monograph on the Elephant-Faced God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 61-62, pl. 32a; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 75, cat. no. 23.

1. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 253.
2. Another feature suggesting ties to an Indic (though not necessarily Pāla) source is the presence of the god's mouse vehicle, which is not normally

included in Javanese representations of Gaṇeśa. See Alice Getty, *Gaṇeśa: A Monograph on the Elephant-Faced God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 61. For general discussion of Gaṇeśa in Indonesian art, see Getty, *Gaṇeśa*, 55-66.

77

#### ŚIVA

Indonesia, Java

Ca. ninth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 12 3/8"

Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, The Netherlands (RMV 1403-2839, 1883)

The style of this image is very close to the previous example and similarly demonstrates the influence of the art of southeastern Bengal on Java. (See cat. no. 76 for discussion.)

Śiva stands atop a double lotus pedestal. He is four-armed and holds his most characteristic attribute, the trident (*triśūla*), in his lower left hand, holds a fly whisk (*cauri*) in his upper left hand, holds a string of recitation beads (*akṣamālā*) in his upper right hand, and displays the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*) with his lower right hand. Although he stands frontally and without flexion to his body, the softly modeled, somewhat fleshy body and gently smiling face prevent the image from having a hard or stiff appearance. Although Śiva is adorned with jewelry and a diadem befitting a king, his hair is piled into his typical ascetic's "crown of matted locks" (*jaṭāmukūṭa*). Adorning his hair on the left side is a crescent moon, one of the god's identifying symbols.

Śiva's lotus pedestal rests atop a solid, rectangular base upon which reclines Nandi, the god's bull vehicle. The lotus petals have the simple, heart-shaped form and upturned tips found commonly in ninth-century Pāla metal images. Behind the god is a solid architectural construct resembling a throne back. It is decorated simply with vertical lines at the sides and a crossbar with knob ends. In their resemblance to the *āmalaka*, a sectioned, fruitlike element that serves as a finial in Indic architecture, these knobs seem to be based on Pāla forms.<sup>1</sup> However, they are more elaborate and larger than their Pāla counterparts, suggesting a departure from the Indic model. A foliate form above the crossbar resembles the type of decoration seen on Pāla thrones, but is simpler and more abstract. Behind the god's head is a circular halo with a raised edge encircled by a row of beads. The lower portion of the stem that once held an umbrella above the figure remains at the top.

#### PUBLISHED:

H. H. Juynboll, *Catalogus van 's Rijks*

*Ethnographisch Museum 5: Javaansche Oudheden* (Leiden: 1909), 67; August Johan Bernet Kempers, *The Bronzes of Nalanda and Hindu-Javanese Art* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1933), 61, pl. 33; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 74, cat. no. 22.

1. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 163, 165.

78

# BUDDHA AMOGHASIDDHI

Indonesia, Java

Ca. ninth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested) with silver and gold

H: 4 5/8"

J. Polak, Amsterdam

Amoghasiddhi (Unfailing Power), the Jina Buddha who presides over the northern realm, is recognized by the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*) he performs with his right hand and by the position of his left hand resting palm upward on his lap. Images of Amoghasiddhi do not normally occur singly, and it is likely that this small image was originally part of a group of images that included depictions of the five Jinas, each facing the center from his respective direction. Such an assembly of images, most likely a three-dimensional *maṇḍala*, also may have included the Bodhisattvas associated with each Jina, protective deities, and a representation of the central divinity of the *maṇḍala*. The Jinas were important in the Vajrayāna practices of Pāla Buddhism and were exported to Java, where they are found extensively in the known corpus of Javanese art.

The image is likely to have been based on a northern Indic model, but it is difficult to link it to a specific artistic center. It may reflect direct association with the Pāla idiom or a variant of the style in a nearby region, such as Orissa.<sup>1</sup> The thick lotus petals are much less delicate than the usual Pāla type, although their shape may reflect a Pāla model. Edged with a tool rather than by hand, the petals were created in a manner common in Java but not in the Pāla lands. The treatment of the rim of the halo also does not conform to Pāla types and bears an unusual incised "herringbone" inner rim and a very thick outer edge of rays.

A distinctive feature found in Javanese metal imagery but not in the Pāla style is the bent axis of the pole

that supports the umbrella above the head of the deity. Unlike Pāla examples, which are invariably straight, this pole is bent at a right angle as if better to center the umbrella above the Buddha's head. The back of the image also reveals differences between Javanese and Pāla workmanship in the smooth, slablike surface that extends from the halo to the base. In Pāla metal works, the separate elements of the composition, such as the throne and the halo, are not united and even from the back are easily recognized, distinct elements, sometimes bearing sculptural detailing.

1. For example, see Debala Mitra, *Bronzes from Achutrajpur, Orissa* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1978). Some of the pieces found at Achutrajpur appear to have been made in the Pāla lands, while others reflect what must have been local Orissan schools of sculpture that were closely related to the Pāla idiom. Orissan influence on the stone sculpture of Java is easily recognized, and it is likely that Orissa was also a source of inspiration for the metal imagery of Java.

79

# TĀRĀ (?)

Indonesia, Java

Ca. late ninth or tenth century, Central Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 8 3/4" W: 5 3/4" D: 3 3/4"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates Purchase (M.73.4.13)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

This four-armed deity is probably a form of Tārā, although the specific form is unknown. In her upper right hand she holds a string of recitation beads (*akṣamālā*), and with her lower right hand she displays the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*). Her lower left hand holds the stem of a white lotus (*puṇḍarīka*), and her upper left hand holds an object that appears to be a book (*pustaka*).<sup>1</sup>

The deity sits in lotus position upon a double lotus pedestal that rests upon a solid rectangular base. A halo edged with sharply delineated rays (*prabhā*) rises behind her. A remnant of the pole that once upheld an umbrella above her head is preserved at the top of the halo.

The figure is dressed in a hip-hugging lower garment with a sash that crosses her torso diagonally. The skirt is ornamented with an incised textile design consisting of circles and other geometric motifs arranged in a striped pattern. Her elaborate and heavy jewelry includes a necklace, armbands, bracelets, earrings, and a diadem. Her hair is piled high and bears a large ornament as a crest, though its design appears to be decorative rather than iconographic.

This image is clearly based upon a Pāla style, but

several features indicate a Javanese rather than Indic origin. These include the solid but plain form of the rectangular pedestal, the carved edges and thick forms of the lotus petals, and the solid form of the halo, which, while rare in Pāla art, apparently was preferred by Javanese artists. The shape and proportions of the deity's body also suggest a non-Pāla style, particularly in the slightly fuller waist and the flattened breasts. Likewise, the facial features show a divergence from the Pāla style, particularly the eyes, which are more closely set and have more downturned outer corners than their typical Pāla counterparts.

PUBLISHED:

(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 74, no. 68.

1. This figure has been identified as Dhanadā Tārā. See Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 74, no. 68. However, Dhanadā Tārā is supposed to hold a *nilotpala* or *utpala* (blue lotus), while this figure holds what is clearly a *pundarika* (white lotus). See Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, Mainly Based on The Sādhnamālā and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Ritual* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1958), 231. Further, since the object held in the upper left hand is difficult to identify and may not be a book, the suggestion that the figure is Dhanadā Tārā must remain tentative.

80

AVALOKITEŚVARA

Reportedly found at Surat Thani in peninsular Thailand, but perhaps from Indonesia, Java (?)

Ca. tenth century (?)

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 12 1/4" W: 3" D: 2 3/4"

Lent by the Kronos Collection

Because small images were transported easily and frequently by the many travellers crisscrossing Asia during the period of Pāla rule, the findspot of a sculpture is not always an accurate indicator of its place of manufacture. This handsome metal image was reportedly found at Surat Thani in peninsular Thailand, and while it may have been a product of a local workshop there, it also might have been made elsewhere, perhaps in the Indonesian region.<sup>1</sup> The extensive contacts between peninsular Thailand and the Indonesian region during the period of Śrīvijaya supremacy are well known, and an image such as this could have been created in one place and transported to another for use.

Avalokiteśvara is easily recognized by the lotus flower he holds in his left hand. The stalk rises from the pedestal and passes through the Bodhisattva's hand. A second, smaller stalk carrying a closed bud rises next to it

from the pedestal. Unlike the usual open blossom seen in Pāla art, the flower held aloft by the Bodhisattva is a beautifully layered bud. The right hand of the Bodhisattva has been broken off, but is likely to have displayed the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*).

Avalokiteśvara stands with his body slightly thrust to his left, providing animation and a sense of implicit movement. His clinging, skirtlike lower garment almost seems to sway with the figure. He stands atop a double lotus pedestal, the petals of which are worn but still display the uncomplicated, smooth form prevalent in early Pāla metal images. The lotus pedestal in turn rests upon a circular disklike base that is unlike the usual Pāla form in its thickness, prominence, shape, and proportions. Behind the figure is a solid halo with rays around the edge of the type seen commonly in Pāla art of about the tenth century. The shape of the halo, with its tapered bottom, is found in a number of images from Kurkihār in the heartland of the Pāla empire, although the Pāla examples of this approximate date do not rise to a point at the top.<sup>2</sup> The pointed top suggests that the image might have been made as late as the eleventh century in an archaized style. Alternatively, the artist may have been emulating the appearance of a point sometimes seen in Pāla images where the base for the umbrella above the image has been ornamented.<sup>3</sup> A loop and prongs on the back of the upper portion of the halo would have held the pole of the umbrella that would have completed the image.

A striking feature of this image is the complicated coiffure and headdress adorning Avalokiteśvara's head. Long locks of hair fall gracefully onto his shoulders, but most of his hair is piled into an extremely tall *jaṭāmukuṭa* (crown of matted locks) adorned with a tiny image (*bimba*) of a seated Buddha, presumably Amitābha, who commonly appears in Avalokiteśvara's headdress. A coil of hair at the top is surmounted by a tall form of a type that is sometimes identified as a flame, but which is more properly interpreted as a radiant gem symbolizing enlightenment.

PUBLISHED:

Martin Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from The Kronos Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 114-115, no. 42.

1. Martin Lerner has noted the striking resemblance between this work and images found on ninth-century Central Javanese monuments. See Martin Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art in The Kronos Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 114.
2. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 176.
3. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 176.



## A BODHISATTVA, POSSIBLY VAJRAPĀṆĪ

Indonesia, Java

Ca. tenth century, late Central Javanese period

Silver

H: 2" W: 1 3/8" D: 1"

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the Kronos Collection, 1982 (1982.462.2)

This figure is easily recognized as a Bodhisattva by his ornamentation and headdress, as well as the presence of a stalk (presumably a lotus stalk) that wraps around his left arm. However, his identity cannot be confirmed because of the absence of attributes. It is possible that he is the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi (Bearer of the *Vajra*). Although Vajrapāṇi's characteristic attribute, the *vajra*, is not present, the gesture of the right hand and its position at the chest is encountered frequently in representations of Vajrapāṇi.<sup>1</sup> In such representations, the Bodhisattva's *vajra* attribute is carried in a vertical position in the palm.<sup>2</sup> The left hand is placed palm down on his left knee and seems to press against it, as may be inferred from the bent elbow pose.<sup>3</sup>

Although encountered more rarely in Buddhist art than the highly popular Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, and Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi is a very important Bodhisattva. He is an embodiment of the knowledge-component of enlightenment, and his *vajra* represents the adamant nature of the Buddhist Dharma. Often paired with Avalokiteśvara, the personification of compassion, together the two symbolize the essential components of Buddhahood,<sup>4</sup> that is, wisdom and compassion.

Although the majority of metal images surviving from Asia are created from copper alloys, examples in precious metals—namely, silver and gold—indicate that these materials also were widely used. Textual and inscriptional sources indicate that very large images may have been cast from such highly valued materials, but the vast majority of surviving examples are tiny, such as this piece.<sup>5</sup> It is likely that larger images made of silver or gold were melted down for reuse during the centuries following their creation and therefore rarely have survived.

While reminiscent of Pāla metal works in style and form, the image bears a number of distinctive features that suggest the local Central Javanese idiom. The Bodhisattva sits atop a double lotus pedestal, but the lotus petals are much larger in proportion and more widely spaced than the usual Pāla configuration. However, the outlined form, created by an incised line that repeats the contour of each petal, is seen in Pāla metal images of about the tenth century.<sup>6</sup> The facial features also differ from Pāla types, particularly in the broad, flat nose, which is unlike the usual pointed and narrow Pāla conventions. The incised brow is inspired by the Indic metaphor in which the shape of the brow is compared to an archer's bow, but differs

from Pāla examples in the presence of a small, pointed form across the upper part of the nose.

In spite of the miniature scale of the image, the Bodhisattva's ornaments, including his headdress, necklace, and armbands, are executed with attention to detail. Most of the detail is created by incised line in the wax model from which the metal image was cast. This contrasts with the more typically Pāla practice of creating even the tiniest details with modeled forms.

## PUBLISHED:

Martin Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from The Kronos Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 120-121, no. 45.

1. Pratapaditya Pal has identified a similarly posed figure as Vajrapāṇi. See Pratapaditya Pal, *The Sensuous Immortals: A Selection of Sculptures from the Pan-Asian Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, [1979], 192, no. 116. Pal's identification is based on the presence of what he identifies as a *vajra* atop the lotus held in the left hand of the figure. However, the object is indistinct, and the identification, which is likely to be correct, probably should rather be inferred from the gesture of the right hand.
2. For an example, see Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography Mainly Based on The Sādhana-mālā and Cognate Tantric Texts of Ritual* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), fig. 27 on p. 62.
3. The hand positions are similar to those of Vajrasattva, who also holds a *vajra* vertically in his right hand. See Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography Mainly Based on The Sādhana-mālā and Cognate Tantric Texts of Ritual*, fig. 41 on p. 66; and Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, fig. 20.13. However, Vajrasattva also would be expected to carry a second attribute, a bell (*ghaṇṭā*), in his left hand. Vajrasattva, who is generally classified as a Buddha rather than a Bodhisattva, would not have a lotus stalk like that of the present image. Therefore, in spite of the similar hand positions, it is unlikely that this figure could be Vajrasattva.
4. For an early example, see Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, fig. 8.32.
5. For a stunning Pāla period image made of silver, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 280.
6. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 43, which is datable by its inscription to the early tenth century.

## 82

## MAHĀVAIROCANA

Indonesia, Java

Ca. tenth century, late Central Javanese or early Eastern Javanese period

Gold figure on metal (copper alloy?) throne

H: 3 3/8"

Society of Friends of Asiatic Art on loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, acquired with the aid of the Rembrandt Society (MAK 313)

Shown in Dayton and Baltimore

For further discussion of Mahāvairocana and his iconography, see cat. nos. 83, 84, and 141.

Mahāvairocana (Great Radiant One), the Buddha in whom the totality of the universe is personified, is a transcendental aspect of Śākyamuni. The focus of much of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism, Mahāvairocana may represent either the *sambhogakāya* (bliss body) or the *dharmakāya* (law [truth] body). In contrast to the *nirmāṇakāya* (emanation or transformation body), which is the realm of mortal Buddhas such as Śākyamuni, the *sambhogakāya* and *dharmakāya* are the realms of the Jina Buddhas and the Ādi Buddha, respectively. Since Mahāvairocana is sometimes conceived as one of the five Jina Buddhas, and sometimes as the Ādi Buddha, the primogeneric source of all things from whom the Jinās and all other existence emanates, he may be either *sambhogakāya* or *dharmakāya*.

Well known in the Buddhism current in the Pāla lands, Mahāvairocana is also emphasized in Pāla-dependent religious traditions. In Javanese Buddhism, Mahāvairocana came to have special importance and was the focus of much of the religious activity during the Central and Eastern Javanese periods. The principal deity of the famous sculptural *maṇḍala* found near Nganjuk in eastern Java (see cat. no. 83), Mahāvairocana is also likely to have been the main deity of one of Java's most famous and important monuments, the Barabudūr *stūpa*.<sup>1</sup>

The key to the identification of this figure as Mahāvairocana is the hand gesture, in which the index finger of the left hand is enclosed by the five fingers of the right, signifying the union of the five knowledges of the Jina Buddhas into the single enlightenment. Sometimes misidentified as one of the variations of the *dharmacakra mudrā*, a teaching gesture, this *mudrā* is known by several names, including *Mahāvairocana mudrā* (Mahāvairocana gesture), *jñānamuṣṭi mudrā* (transcendent insight fist gesture), *Tathāgatamuṣṭi mudrā* (Tathāgata [Thus-gone one, i.e., a Buddha]-fist gesture), and *bodhyaṅgī mudrā* (enlightenment-member gesture).

This exquisite miniature is in a style that can only be called Javanese; however, the ancestry of the style may be traced to Indic sources primarily in the Pāla lands.<sup>2</sup> The jewelry and textile design in particular suggest the Pāla legacy. The emphasis on large, beadlike elements in the jewelry relates to late Javanese works of the Eastern Javanese style (compare with cat. nos. 83 and 84), but the full face relates to Central Javanese materials. A suggested date of about the tenth century for the creation of this piece is based on its transitional characteristics, for it relates to ninth- and tenth-century Central Javanese works while anticipating tenth- and eleventh-century images of the Eastern Javanese idiom.

The viewer's attention is rightfully captured by the golden radiance of the central figure, while the throne and pedestal are of secondary importance. In contrast to the careful and rich detailing of the figure, which is enhanced

by having been created out of gold, the throne and pedestal are simple and almost schematically rendered. The disparity between the gold figure and the copper alloy throne and pedestal has been increased over the centuries, for the figure, made of a material that does not corrode, has remained pristine, while the throne and pedestal have deteriorated. While this circumstance is not likely to have been part of the creator's original intentions, this effect enhances the effort to depict the Buddha who represents all that is unchanging in the universe.

Easily transfixed by the beauty and perfection of the golden figure of Mahāvairocana, today's viewer can well imagine the powerful effect this image would have had on its makers and those who used it in their religious devotions. Just as a whisper can command attention equal to that demanded by the loudest shout, this tiny image conveys its religious message as powerfully as any image of superhuman scale.

#### PUBLISHED:

N. J. Krom, "Hindoe-Javaanse bronzen; de collectie Loudon," *Nederlandsch-Indië, Oud en Nieuw* (1919), fig. 10; W. F. Stutterheim, *Cultuurgeschiedenis van Java in beeld* (Weltevreden: Uitgegeven door het Java-Instituut en G. Kolff and Co., 1926), fig. 47; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed., *Asiatic Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Landshoff in cooperation with the Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst and the Rijksmuseum, 1985), 174-175, no. 187; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 93, no. 41.

1. For the attribution of Mahāvairocana as the main deity of Barabudūr, see John C. Huntington, "The Iconography of Barabudūr Revisited: The Concept of Sreṣṭha (Multivalent Symbolism) and the Sarva(buddha)kāya as Applied to the Remaining Problems," forthcoming in a volume of conference papers being edited by Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke Klokke. The conference, held in conjunction with the "Divine Bronze" exhibition, took place in May of 1988. For the exhibition, see Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).
2. It is possible that some details in an image such as this may be traced to Orissa, which also exerted considerable influence on the art of Java.

THREE VAJRA DEITIES FROM A BUDDHIST  
MAṆḌALA

Indonesia, probably eastern Java, Caṇḍi Reja, Nganjuk District

Ca. late tenth or eleventh century, Eastern Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: each approximately 3 1/2"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.87)

were tragically lost in a fire at the Dutch Pavilion at the Colonial Exhibition in Paris in 1931.

Regrettably, the complete group was not recorded prior to dispersal, nor have the scattered images been published together since that time. Thus, the first task in studying this remarkable group of images remains their reassembly, in a publication if not in actuality. Because of the incomplete records made at the time of the discovery, numerous questions about the find remain and might never be answered. The most crucial of these are whether the *maṇḍala* was complete and the total number of pieces found. Further, while it is generally assumed that the



Figure 21. Main figure and some of the other metal images found in the Nganjuk group.

In 1913, a large group of metal images accidentally and fortuitously was discovered at the village of Caṇḍi Reja, Nganjuk District, in eastern Java. This stunning collection belonged to what is believed to be a large sculptural *maṇḍala*, which unfortunately was dispersed shortly after its discovery. Approximately forty images from the group immediately became part of the collection of the Bataviaasch Museum, now the Museum Nasional, in Jakarta, and two years later some seventeen additional pieces were acquired by the museum. Others, sold privately soon after the discovery, have found their way into collections throughout the world. Some of the most beautiful pieces from the Museum Nasional collection

pieces belonged to a single *maṇḍala*, the possibility that more than one *maṇḍala* was represented must also be considered.

Because of these difficulties, as well as the fact that other images closely related in style are known, it is not possible to be absolutely certain that works scattered throughout the world, such as the three included in this exhibition, definitely belonged to the Nganjuk group. However, until other evidence is forthcoming, the style, size, and subject matter of these works strongly suggest that they do.

The central deity of the *maṇḍala* was Mahāvairocana displaying his characteristic *mudrā*,<sup>1</sup> as may be seen in an

early photograph<sup>2</sup> showing the main figure and a selection of the other images (fig. 21, center). Approximately eight and one-half inches high, Mahāvairocana was the largest figure in the group, with the others hierarchically scaled according to category.<sup>3</sup> Next in importance and size were representations of the Jina Buddhas, each about six inches high (see Akṣobhya, placed to the right of Mahāvairocana in fig. 21). In a complete *maṇḍala*, there would be four Jinas, one each placed to the east, south, west, and north of Mahāvairocana. Slightly smaller than the Jinas, about five inches in height, were the Bodhisattvas associated with the Jinas (such as the Bodhisattva to the left of Mahāvairocana in fig. 21, which, because of the elephant depicted on his throne, may be identified as part of the Akṣobhya group of Bodhisattvas). In a complete *maṇḍala*, four Bodhisattvas would attend each of the Jina Buddhas, and these would be arranged with one figure to the east, south, west, and north of the respective Jina. The remaining images consisted of hosts of other figures, both male and female, comprising the deities of the outer *maṇḍala* and retinue. Belonging to two hierarchically sized groups, the figures in one set are slightly over four inches high while those in the other set are approximately three and one-half inches high. The three figures included in this exhibition would belong to this last, smallest series of figures.

Assuming that a dauntless scholar one day will succeed in reassembling photographs of most of the pieces in the original find,<sup>4</sup> the next task would be to determine which text associated with Mahāvairocana might have been the basis for this artistic representation. For while the *maṇḍala* may be identified generically as a Vajradhātu (*Vajra Realm*)<sup>5</sup> *maṇḍala* associated with Mahāvairocana, the specific text and version of the text remain to be confirmed. It has been suggested that the *maṇḍala* corresponds to one that is described in an important commentary to the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, the *Tattvāloka*, which was written by the Indian *ācārya* Ānandagarbha.<sup>6</sup> Tāranātha records that Ānandagarbha was born in Magadha and studied at Vikramaśīla monastery during the reign of the Pāla king Mahīpāla (I)<sup>7</sup> (ca. 992-1042). However, the great similarities among the more than thirty Vajradhātu *maṇḍalas* occurring in the major texts associated with Mahāvairocana, namely, the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* and the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra*, make it difficult to be certain which text was used. Until and unless distinctive and exclusive elements of the sculpted *maṇḍala* can be related to one of the texts, a final judgment cannot be made, and this is dependent upon a successful reassembly of the Nganjuk *maṇḍala*.<sup>8</sup>

Both texts were in current use at monasteries flourishing during the Pāla period. The Tibetan translator Rin chen bzang po translated the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* and Ānandagarbha's

commentary upon it from Sanskrit into Tibetan.<sup>9</sup> Atiśa, an eleventh-century abbot at Vikramaśīla monastery in the Pāla lands, taught the cycle, including the texts, when he went to Tibet from his post at Vikramaśīla. However, it is possible that he had learned the cycle while in Śrīvijaya during his twelve-year sojourn from 1013 to 1025.<sup>10</sup> There he studied under the renowned Dharmakīrti, who had himself studied in India, where he may have learned the texts. Since the texts were so well established in Indic Buddhism during the Pāla period and even earlier,<sup>11</sup> and apparently were widely transmitted abroad, it cannot be concluded that it was Ānandagarbha's late tenth- or eleventh-century commentary that served as the basis for the Nganjuk images.

The style of the images seems to argue against an ongoing or current infusion from the Pāla lands during the late tenth or eleventh century. Like other examples of Eastern Javanese art of this approximate period, the Nganjuk images show little evidence of direct, recent contact with the Pāla realm. The most active period of interaction between Java and the Pāla kingdom took place during the eighth and ninth centuries, as is well documented by inscriptional evidence and stylistic associations between the artistic traditions. But by the tenth and eleventh centuries, Pāla influence apparently had waned. This may be surmised from the Nganjuk figural style in particular, which relates more to the ninth-century Pāla metal images than Pāla works of the tenth and eleventh centuries. This suggests that the images reflect the preservation and prolongation of an earlier Pāla style rather than one that had kept abreast with the Pāla developments. It may be proposed that the impetus for the creation of this extraordinary *maṇḍala* did not result from current and ongoing contact with the Pāla world. Rather, its creation seems to have developed out of previously assimilated religious practices and artistic traditions growing out of earlier Indonesian idioms.<sup>12</sup>

Although the details of the evolution of their style remain largely unknown, the Nganjuk images are generally regarded as a hallmark of the Eastern Javanese style, for they often are used as a measuring stick for evaluating cognate images. The style is characterized by the slenderness, long limbs, and delicacy of the figures and the elaborateness of their ornamentation, particularly their crowns and jewelry, which are made of knobby, beadlike forms that impart a strongly textured appearance to the works. The use of these three-dimensional elements contrasts with a popular technique used in Central Javanese works, where incision is used to depict the elements of the composition in preference to elements modeled in the round.<sup>13</sup>

The three images included here are retinue deities, who may be Bodhisattvas,<sup>14</sup> but who are identified more cautiously as "*vajra* beings," the term for all minor deities



in the texts. In his left hand, one of the figures holds a lotus, atop which is an attribute that appears to be a wheel. The attribute he holds in his right hand is difficult to identify, as are the objects held in the hands of the other two figures. Displaying a variety of hand gestures and attributes, the figures are striking in the liveliness of their poses and tilted heads. Assembled into their original context, the figures must have created a lively, dynamic effect.

The concept of the *maṇḍala* was well established in the Buddhist art of the Pāla period, and one can well imagine that some of the metal images in the Pāla repertoire once belonged to such magnificent groups. Surviving painted *maṇḍalas* that are based on the Pāla traditions (see cat. nos. 118 and 121) and individual compositions from the Pāla school in which complex *maṇḍalas* are depicted (cat. no. 38) verify that the *maṇḍala* was a major component of the Pāla tradition and the legacy it bequeathed to the other regions of Asia.

#### PUBLISHED:

Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd* (New York: The Asia Society, Inc., 1970), 43, 45, no. 29; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 42.

#### SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NGANJUK MAṆḌALA IMAGES:

N. J. Krom, "De bronsvondst van Ngandjoek," *Rapporten van den Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indie* (1913), 59-72, pls. 12-23; N. J. Krom, *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst*, 3 vols. ('S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1923), vol. 2, 445 and vol. 3, pl. 109; W. F. Stutterheim, *Cultuurgeschiedenis van Java in beeld* (Weltevreden: Uitgegeven door het Java-Instituut en G. Kolff and Co., 1926), 39, fig. 49; F. D. K. Bosch, "Buddhistische Gegevens uit Balische Handschriften," *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Letterkunde, Series B, vol. 68, no. 3 (1929): 43-77 [an English translation was published in F. D. K. Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Translation Series 5 (The Hague: Netherlands Institute for International Cultural Relations, 1961), 109-133]; A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pls. 168-171; K. W. Lim, "Studies in Later Buddhist Iconography," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 120, no. 3 (1964): 327-341; Jan Fontein, R. Soekmono, and Satyawati Suleiman, *Ancient Indonesian Art of the Central and Eastern Javanese Periods* (New York: Asia House Gallery, 1971), 151, nos. 45-49; Martin Lerner, *Bronze Sculptures from Asia* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), no. 20, pl. 15;

[Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam], *Borobudur: Kunst en religie in het oude Java*, Catalogue for an exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 21-July 3, 1977 (Amsterdam: The Rijksmuseum, 1977), 153-159, nos. 68-73; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed., *Asiatic Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Landshoff in cooperation with the Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst and the Rijksmuseum, 1985), 176, no. 189; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 32-35, 103-104, nos. 51, 52.

1. For discussion of the names of this gesture, see cat. no. 82.
2. The photograph is taken from N. J. Krom, *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst*, 3 vols. ('S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1923), vol. 3, pl. 109.
3. The central figure was first identified by F. D. K. Bosch as Mañjuśrī, but this is clearly incorrect because of the distinctive *mudrā*. See F. D. K. Bosch, "Buddhistische Gegevens uit Balische Handschriften," *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Letterkunde, Series B, vol. 68, no. 3 (1929): 43-77. An English translation was published in F. D. K. Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*, Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Translation Series 5 (The Hague: Netherlands Institute for International Cultural Relations, 1961): 109-133. Bosch's identification of the figure as Mañjuśrī subsequently was followed by other authors. For example, A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 63.
4. The greatest challenge will be presented by the attempt to locate the dispersed images. The images that went immediately to the museum in Jakarta were published by Krom. See N. J. Krom, "De bronsvondst van Ngandjoek," *Rapporten van den Oudheidkundigen Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indie* (1913), 59-72, pls. 12-23.
5. The term *Vajradhātu* is sometimes translated as "Diamond Matrix." However, the word *vajra* is only partially explained by "diamond," which denotes something that is hard, permanent, and indestructible. The term *dhātu* perhaps is more properly interpreted in this context as "realm" or "world," rather than "matrix."
6. This suggestion was made by K. W. Lim, and following him, a number of scholars have assumed that this commentary formed the basis of the sculpted *maṇḍala*. See K. W. Lim, "Studies in Later Buddhist Iconography," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 120, no. 3 (1964): 327-341.
7. Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970), 285.
8. Lim did not try to collect photographs of all known Naganjuk pieces, and he did not apply the text in a detailed manner to the actual images on a piece-by-piece basis.
9. Giuseppe Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, 4 vols. in 7 parts (Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1932-1941), vol. 3, pt. 1, 39-42; English edition of vol. 3, pt. 1, ed. Lokesh Chandra, trans. Uma Marina Vesci and others, *The Temples of Western Tibet and their Artistic Symbolism* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988), 38-39. See also English edition of vol. 2, ed. Lokesh Chandra from a first draft translation by Nancy Kipp Smith, under the direction of Thomas J. Pritzker, *Rin-chen-bzang-po and the Renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet Around the Millennium* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988).
10. For Atiśa's stay in Śrīvijaya and the story of Dharmakīrti, see Alaka Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet* (Calcutta: Indian Studies, Past and Present, 1967), 83-95.
11. For the early date of such materials, see John C. Huntington, "Cave Six at Aurangabad: A Tantrayāna Monument," in Joanna G. Williams, ed., *Kalāḍarsana: American Studies in the Art of India* (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. in collaboration with the American Institute of Indian Studies, 1981), 47-55. The *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* was also already well known in China by the eighth century and may have

been known in Śrīvijaya as well.

12. Alternatively, the possibility that these images are earlier than the tenth or eleventh century might be investigated, something that would have to be done by studying them in relationship to firmly dated architectural and stone monuments.
13. For a recent, detailed description of the stylistic elements of the Nganjuk pieces based on an extensive collection of photographs, see Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 32-35.
14. Some textual descriptions identify the deities of the outer portion of the *maṇḍala* as Bodhisattvas, but others classify them generically as *vajra* deities, that is, adamant Dharma beings. A number of the images in the *maṇḍala*, including some of the small ones, contained small plates of gold upon which inscriptions had been written. The inscriptions have remained undeciphered, but they may contain clues to the identities of the figures, which otherwise must rest upon the identification of distinctive features, such as attributes and *mudrās*.

84

# MAHĀVAIROCANA AND PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ

Indonesia, Java

Ca. late tenth or eleventh century, Eastern Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 6 3/8"

Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, The Netherlands (RMV 1403-2862, 1883)

Mahāvairocana and Prajñāpāramitā sit side by side on a shared throne.<sup>1</sup> They have separate lotus pedestals and halos, indicating their individual transcendence and radiance. Although Mahāvairocana is slightly larger than Prajñāpāramitā, the figures are created on the same scale, if one assumes that in general women may be expected to be somewhat smaller than men. Although Mahāvairocana's halo is slightly larger and his umbrella slightly higher than hers, the two figures convey an extraordinary sense of parity. That they are Buddhas of identical stature has been communicated explicitly in the artistic treatment. Embodiments of the components of the final enlightenment of the Buddhist practitioner, Mahāvairocana represents compassion and Prajñāpāramitā represents transcendent wisdom. Each of limited value without the other, both are necessary for the achievement of the ultimate Buddhist goal. The identical gestures they display with their hands convey the importance of each deity's religious message. Although this gesture has a number of names,<sup>2</sup> it is perhaps best called *bodhyaṅgī mudrā* (enlightenment-member gesture) here, for each deity uses it to express one of the two necessary members, or components, of enlightenment. That the gestures are alike underscores the conceptual unity of the pair.

The Eastern Javanese style is evident in the treatment of the figures, with their slender, delicate bodies. Their narrow faces and prominent facial features suggest what might have been an ultimate source for the style in the Pāla

lands, perhaps at Nālandā. Typical of the Eastern Javanese idiom, the image is richly ornamented with three-dimensional forms that decorate the edges of the halos and the throne and create the jewelry of the deities. The base of the throne, a simple rectangle articulated with molding along the bottom, is decorated with circular perforations arranged in groups of four, further enlivening the surface of the image. The poles that support the umbrellas above the heads of the deities are bent in the typically Javanese manner.

An inscription in Old Javanese on the inside of the pedestal identifies the male figure as Werocana (Vairocana).<sup>3</sup>

PUBLISHED:

H. H. Juynboll, *Catalogus van 's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum 5: Javaansche Oudheden* (Leiden: 1909), 80, pl. 11, fig. 2; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 99, no. 47.

1. For a strikingly similar depiction of the Buddha Ratnasambhava and his female Buddha consort, see Herbert Härtel, Volker Moeller, and G. Bhattacharya, *Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, Katalog 1976* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1976), 208, no. 311; also published in Volker Moeller, *Javanische Bronzen* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Indische Kunst, 1985), 30-31. The similarities between the two pieces, including their heights (the Berlin piece is 6 3/4"), suggest that they could have belonged to a group of images of the Jina Buddha couples.
2. See also cat.no.82 for other names of this gesture.
3. See Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 99.

85

# VAJRASATTVA

Indonesia, Java

Ca. late tenth or eleventh century, Eastern Javanese period

Silver figure on metal (copper alloy?) throne

H: 5 3/8"

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Gift of the Rijksmuseum-Stichting 1970 (RM 1970-2)

Shown in Dayton and Baltimore

Vajrasattva (*Vajra* Being) symbolizes the ultimate and adamant clarity of awareness sought by the Buddhist practitioner. He is normally identified by the presence of a *vajra* in his right hand and a bell (*ghaṇṭā*) in his left hand. However, in this example the attributes are absent and the

figure may be recognized solely by the positions of the hands, which are held just as they would be if the attributes were present. The *vajra* symbolizes the indestructible compassion of a Buddha, while the bell and its resonant sound represent transcendent wisdom and its proclamation. As a pair, the attributes denote Buddhist enlightenment, in which compassion for the beings caught up in phenomenal existence is reconciled with the realization of the emptiness of all things.

Although generally classified as a Buddha, Vajrasattva is ornamented like a Bodhisattva.<sup>1</sup> Rather than signifying his royal nature, Vajrasattva's ornaments—including a crown, earrings, necklaces, anklets, bracelets, armlets, and a girdle—are badges of the perfections (*pāramitās*) necessary for the attainment of enlightenment. Made of silver, but mounted on a copper alloy throne, the heavily ornamented figure of Vajrasattva is strikingly beautiful.

The Pāla sources for the style of this image are evident in the treatment of the figure, the jewelry, and the lotus pedestal upon which he sits. However, the work is clearly depicted in what has come to be known as the East Javanese style. Its key elements include the very slender, delicate build of the body and the heavy jewelry created by three-dimensionally modeled elements, such as beadlike forms. These provide the image with a richness not prevalent in works in the earlier, Central Javanese idiom or in the Pāla ancestors of such images. The high pedestal and its particular configuration do not have a precedent in the Pāla tradition and may represent an indigenous Javanese innovation.

#### PUBLISHED:

N. J. Krom, "Hindoe-Javaanse bronzen; de collectie Loudon," *Nederlandsche-Indië, Oud en Nieuw* (1919), pl. 11; W. F. Stutterheim, *Cultuurgeschiedenis van Java in beeld* (Weltevreden: Uitgegeven door het Java-Instituut en G. Kolff and Co., 1926), fig. 48; [Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam], *Oosterse Schat. 4000 Jaar Aziatische Kunst*, Exhibition catalogue (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1954), no. 645; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, ed., *Asiatic Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Landshoff in cooperation with the Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst and the Rijksmuseum, 1985), 175, no. 188; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 105, no. 53.

functions. In the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, a text that is known to have been practiced in Java, he is the master of the five secret Bodhisattvas who represent the esoteric transformation of the Jinas.

86

#### AVALOKITEŚVARA

Indonesia, Java

Ca. eleventh century, Eastern Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 9 1/2"

J. Polak, Amsterdam

Handsome and richly ornamented, yet serene, this image represents a high point in Javanese metal imagery. Ultimately indebted to the Pāla schools of metal sculpture, the image retains vestiges of the Pāla style in the figure and his lotus pedestal. However, the richly embellished throne and heavily decorated pedestal are strictly reflective of Javanese artistic tastes that had been developing for centuries apart from influence from the Pāla lands.

Avalokiteśvara sits atop a double lotus pedestal with his legs folded in *padmāsana*. His spine is stretched, his back is slightly arched, and his head tilts slightly downward. His right hand rests on his right knee and displays the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*); his right hand grasps the stem of a lotus, which rises to the height of his left shoulder. Compared with Pāla examples, the stalk is plump and succulent, and the flower is shown as a closed bud in the Javanese fashion rather than the open-blossom form popular in Pāla art. The Bodhisattva's jewelry is heavy, thick, and three-dimensionally modeled, as is characteristic of the Eastern Javanese idiom. His coiffure is elaborate and tall and is ornamented with a diadem and jewels. The central ornament in the crown is a schematically rendered representation of the Buddha Amitābha, who characteristically appears in Avalokiteśvara's headdress.

The pedestal is unlike anything known from the Pāla region and reflects the development in Javanese art from simpler, solid rectangular bases of about the ninth century (cat. no. 73) to richer, more complicated forms. The lower part is stepped and the upper platform is ringed with elaborately conceived elements, probably gems ornamented with the *prabhā* motif, which do not appear on pedestals in Pāla art. The umbrella (*chattrā*) above the head of Avalokiteśvara is a motif well known in Indic iconography from an early date, but the smooth, deep, undecorated, streamerless, and almost bell-shaped form contrasts with Pāla examples.<sup>1</sup> Further, the shaft of the umbrella bends at a right angle in the Javanese manner, contrasting with the straight shaft typical in Pāla metal imagery.

The ornamentation of the throne and halo is probably

1. Vajrasattva is a complex, multivalent figure in Buddhist iconography. Depending upon the system followed, he may have any of several

the most notable feature of this image. Radiating out in flamelike exuberance, the decoration resembles flame and foliate motifs found on stone monuments of Java rather than most metal images. The *makara* motif above the crossbar of the throne, while based on a Pāla iconographic precedent, is so embellished that it almost loses its recognizability. In spite of the vitality of the forms, they are largely conceived as two-dimensional rather than three-dimensional elements. Part of an internationally popular trend toward elaboration in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, similar decoration, especially around the halos, may be found in late Pāla examples (cat. no. 37) and in Pāla-derived works from the Himalayan region (cat. no. 120). The throneback is strikingly flat and two-dimensional, with undecorated, knobless crossbars.

#### PUBLISHED:

*Delft Oude Kunst en Antich* (Delft, 1987), 57, color plate; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 100, cat. no. 48.

1. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 179, 180, 183, 186, 273, and 274.

87

#### MAHĀBALA

Indonesia, Java

Ca. eleventh or twelfth century, Eastern Javanese period

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 6 3/16" W: 4 3/4" D: 2 1/2"

Lent by the Kronos Collection

The threatening gesture (*tarjanī mudrā*) that he displays with his left hand identifies this figure as Mahābala (Great Strength) rather than another of the fierce (*krodha*) deities of the Buddhist pantheon. In contrast to the more well known Mahākāla (Great Time or Great Black One) (cat. nos. 26, 27, and 120), with whom he is sometimes confused, Mahābala is encountered infrequently in Tantric Buddhist art.<sup>1</sup>

Like all fierce (*krodha*) deities in the Buddhist pantheon, Mahābala's frightening appearance is not intended to scare faithful Buddhist devotees. Instead, this deity is a powerful defender against the enemies of the Buddhist path, and his fierceness reflects the vigor with which he smites his foes.

Mahābala stands in an aggressive stance that is identified as either *ālīḍha* or *pratyālīḍha* pose (see cat. no.

12 for discussion of these terms). Unlike the static poses generally assumed by peaceful deities, his posture suggests the ability to jump quickly to attack an enemy. Graceful as well as dynamic, the posture, with the bent right knee, suggests the balance and control of a finely choreographed dance.

Mahābala appears in a six-headed, six-legged, and twelve-armed form. Of the six faces, five are fierce in appearance and one is peaceful. The attributes held in the hands have been lost, but in addition to the identifying *tarjanī mudrā* of the front left hand, the lowered front right hand displays the gesture of gift bestowal (*varada mudrā*). The multiplication of heads, arms, and legs is a well-known feature of tantric iconography and is especially prevalent among deities of the fierce type. The plump proportions of the body are also characteristic of *krodha* deities.

Like many *krodha* deities, Mahābala's iconography might seem to be repugnant at first. Not only does he trample upon a corpse, but his headdresses, his necklace, and the sacred thread that crosses his torso are studded with skulls rather than jewels. Like all transcendent deities, Mahābala stands atop a lotus pedestal, but the base upon which it rests is strewn with human limbs, bones, skulls, and a flayed skin. Symbolic of the renunciation of egoistic desires that the pure practitioner must make, these remains depict the exposure grounds in which the Buddhist devotee can offer his or her no-longer needed body parts to living animals for food. Sometimes used as places of meditation but more generally only envisioned by meditators, such charnel grounds were powerful reminders of the impermanence of life that must be understood in order to cultivate detachment from one's own life, body, and possessions.

Tantric deities of the *krodha* class are well known in the Pāla artistic repertoire, and such an image is likely to be a descendent of a Pāla ancestor. A general resemblance between this work and other angry deities depicted in the repertoires of Pāla-inspired artistic traditions, such as those of Nepal and Tibet, suggest a common source in the Pāla lands for such images.

#### PUBLISHED:

J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *Some Buddhist Sculptures and Indian Paintings* (Amsterdam: J. Polak Gallery, 1982), pl. 1; Martin Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from The Kronos Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 126-127, no. 48.

1. Although he is certain to have been known in Pāla Buddhism, Pāla images depicting him have not been identified. For textual sources relating to Mahābala, see F. A. Bischoff, *Ārya Mahābala-Nāma-Mahāyānasūtra: Tibétain (mss. de Touen-Houang) et Chinois* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1956).



"TRUE BODY OF AVALOKITEŚVARA" (CHIN:  
ZHENSHE GUANSHIYIN)

China, Yunnan region, Dali kingdom

Ca. eleventh or twelfth century (?)

Copper alloy (untested) with fire gilding

H: 13 3/8" W: 3 3/8" D: 2 1/4"

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Guy H. Mitchell  
(1926.266)

One of the most interesting extensions of the Pāla style occurred in the southwestern Chinese region of Yunnan. Although little known, the Yunnanese kingdoms of Nanzhao and Dali were powerful and politically important states from the seventh through the mid-thirteenth centuries, until the Mongol armies conquered the Yunnan region in 1253.<sup>1</sup> As is often true in peripheral kingdoms, the economy prospered through trade, and Dali effectively controlled the trade routes along the Mekong and Salween river gorges.

Due to its geographic location, Yunnan was subject to intercourse with a number of other regions, including China proper, Tibet, India and Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and other parts of Southeast Asia (fig. 20). Yunnan may have been in contact with the Indian world from as early as the third century B.C.,<sup>2</sup> and there is ample evidence of continuing interaction over the centuries. Since it is not possible to travel between India and Yunnan without traversing a number of other cultural areas, the history of the contact between India and Yunnan is complexly intermingled with that of other regions.

A number of virtually identical gilded metal images of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara from Yunnan provide remarkable documentation of the complex religious and historical interactions among India and Yunnan and their Southeast Asian intermediaries.<sup>3</sup> Although the images range in size, they are similar stylistically and iconographically. Like the others, this example shows Avalokiteśvara in a frontal, standing posture with his legs straight and his body unflexed. The right hand displays a gesture of discourse called *vyākhyāna mudrā*, while the left displays the gesture of gift-bestowal (*varada mudrā*). An image (*bimba*) of the Buddha Amitābha appears in the headdress, confirming the identification of the figure as Avalokiteśvara. The Bodhisattva's upper torso is bare. His skirtlike lower garment hangs to his ankles and falls in folds across his legs in concentric, evenly spaced rows. He is adorned with earrings, necklaces, armbands, and bracelets. His hair is long and elegantly styled, with locks falling to his shoulders. Iconographically, it would be expected that the figure once had a halo and stood atop a lotus pedestal.<sup>4</sup>

The image combines Chinese characteristics, such as the treatment of the face and the fire-gilding technique,

with Indian elements, such as the hair style, jewelry, and costume. Although probably ultimately derived from the imagery of the eastern Indic region in the pre-Pāla or Pāla period,<sup>5</sup> the image type shows evidence of modification during its transmission from India to Yunnan. The figure shares a number of general features with pre-Pāla metal images of about the late seventh or early eighth century from both Bihar and Bengal, including the slender body build and some details of the jewelry and hair style.<sup>6</sup> However, the closest counterpart in the Indic world for the treatment of the lower half of the body is found outside the Pāla area, for the stiffly locked knees and skirtlike drapery are found in the seventh- and eighth-century artistic idioms that flourished under the Pallava dynasty of Tamilnadu.<sup>7</sup> It is well known that south Indian ports served in the complex network of trade relations among the Indian world, Southeast Asia, and China. Thus, it is not unexpected that the southern style might have been conflated with the northern type as it was disseminated. The relationship of the Yunnanese images to Southeast Asian artistic idioms (see cat. no. 80), particularly one of the styles that is often loosely termed "Śrīvijaya," is also evident.<sup>8</sup> However, because these styles also are derived from Pāla models, it is difficult to distinguish between elements that came directly from an original Pāla source and ones that were transmitted through a Southeast Asian intermediary.

It is possible that an original source for the image was brought to Yunnan in the seventh century. The deity of the image, Avalokiteśvara, is believed to have been incarnate in an Indian monk who came to Yunnan around 649. The monk is credited with having brought Buddhism into Yunnan, but it is likely that Buddhism was introduced earlier, perhaps at the time Aśoka's descendents arrived. This Indian monk, who wore a "red lotus turban" and came to be known as "Country-founding Avalokiteśvara," is credited with having chosen the first Nanzhao king by his prediction.<sup>9</sup> From this time on, Buddhism was the state religion of the region. It has been assumed<sup>10</sup> that this monk brought an image type with him (whether actual or conceptual) that somehow became important for its talismanic properties, serving specifically as the "Luck of Yunnan." The original appearance of this image type is unknown, but it may have resembled pre-Pāla and early Pallava images. As will be suggested, it may have served as a model or partial model for the image type under discussion.

This latter image type apparently came into vogue around the tenth century under the Dali successors to the Nanzhao kings. Specifically, the form of Avalokiteśvara shown in the images was the tutelary divinity of the Duan family that ruled Yunnan from 937 to 1253.<sup>11</sup> Serving as an *iṣṭadevatā*, that is, a deity chosen by the worshipper as a special protector or object of devotion from whom material and/or spiritual help is expected, the image may have

replaced an earlier Indian or Chinese model.

The relationship between the possible image type brought to Yunnan in the seventh century by the Indian monk and the later, surviving images of the Dali kingdom is unclear. During the early tenth-century struggles that led to the Duan family's ascendancy, images apparently based on the early type but perhaps also inflected by later artistic developments began to be created as the Duan family's "true body" of Avalokiteśvara (Chin. Zhenshen Guanshiyin [Chen-shen Kuan-shih-yin]). It is likely that many, if not all, of the Duan rulers had images cast when they assumed the imperial prerogatives. This theory, which accords with known talismanic practices, would explain the number of known images (which roughly corresponds with the number of rulers),<sup>12</sup> the relative lateness of the type in comparison to the date of the presumed introduction to Yunnan of the model, and the stylistic consistency—because the magical potency of the talisman would only be preserved if the image were "correct."

Because these were formulaic images and all of them are so similar, it is difficult to determine their proper chronological sequence. Indeed, no chronology has been attempted; and it is uncertain whether the effort would prove to be very meaningful.<sup>13</sup> An inscription on one of the images, which belongs to the Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, provides the only fixed date for the images.<sup>14</sup> The inscription, located on the back of the lower garment, states that the image was made by Emperor Duan Zhengxing (Tuan Cheng-hsing; reigned 1148-1171). The Zhengxing image would have to have been made during the time he was emperor, presumably at the beginning of his reign, and therefore it must date from about 1148 or slightly later. Since Zhengxing had only five successors before the Mongol conquest, his is probably one of the latest of these images, unless the subjugated rulers of Dali continued to make them after the Mongol conquest. However, one assumes that with the Mongol conquest the "Luck of Yunnan" had run out.

Using this dated image as the only fixed point, images of the type commonly are suggested to date from the eleventh or twelfth century. Because of the lack of other information that is helpful in dating, this suggested date has been adopted here. However, the full range of likely dates theoretically would be from the mid-tenth century to the first half of the thirteenth century based on the period of Duan family power.

It is possible that other historical information concerning the images has been lost, and other records may come to light in the future. One source of information might be consecration materials that apparently were inserted into the images; most (if not all) of the images apparently had openings in the back for the insertion of consecration materials. Should the contents of one of these

images survive intact, it may contain prayers or dedications that would reveal the religious practices associated with the image and perhaps information about the date of dedication.<sup>15</sup>

Contact between the eastern Indic region and Yunnan was established through intermediaries, reflecting the complicated dynamics of the overland and sea routes connecting various portions of Asia. A virtual map of this rich intercultural mixture is vividly materialized in this image from Yunnan, which represents an amalgam of Pāla, south Indian, Southeast Asian, and Chinese elements.

JCH and SLH

#### PUBLISHED:

Helen B. Chapin, "Yünnanese Images of Avalokiteśvara," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8 (1944-45), pl. 4.

1. For a history of the region, see Charles Backus, *The Nan-chao kingdom and Tang China's southwestern frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See also Appendix III, Charts 9-10. *The Nanzhao kingdom lasted from 649 to 902 and the Dali kingdom lasted from 902 to 1253.*
2. The Indian Emperor Aśoka's third son had nine grandsons, who are said to have been the progenitors of the people of Nanzhao. See Bindeshwari Prasad Sinha, ed., *Comprehensive History of Bihar*, vol. 1, pt. 2, Historical Research Series 13 (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1974), 565. However, in actuality, the Yunnanese population is probably largely Thai. Y. Mishra, who wrote the pertinent section of the *Comprehensive History of Bihar* volume, also notes that the prevalence of Indic place names in the vicinity of Nanzhao strongly supports the case for considerable Indian influence in the region. Some of these names include Pippala cave, the Bodhi tree, the Grdhakūṭa, the Kukkuṭapādagiri, the stone mansion of Upagupta, and the stūpa containing relics of Ānanda (p. 565). According to Mishra, both Hindu and Buddhist influence was felt in the region.
3. The images were studied extensively by Helen B. Chapin. For her seminal article on the subject, see Helen B. Chapin, "Yünnanese Images of Avalokiteśvara," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8 (1944-45): 131-186. For other documents crucial to the study of the images, including paintings that depict the images, see Helen B. Chapin, "A Long Roll of Buddhist Images," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* (June 1936), 1-24; (Dec. 1936), 1-10; (June 1938), 26-67; Helen B. Chapin (revised by Alexander C. Soper), *A Long Roll of Buddhist Images* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1972; originally published in *Artibus Asiae* 32 [1970], pt. 1, 5-41; pt. 2/3, 157-199; pt. 4, 259-306; 33, 1-2 [1971], 75-142); and Li Lin-ts'an, *A Study of the Nan-Chao and Ta-Li Kingdoms in the Light of Art Materials found in Various Museums* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1982).
4. None of the images known to Helen B. Chapin had a halo and only a few had pedestals. See Helen B. Chapin, "Yünnanese Images of Avalokiteśvara," 145. The example in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., probably had a halo, as may be inferred from the bracket on the back of the image. See A. G. Wenley, "A Radiocarbon Dating of a Yünnanese Image of Avalokiteśvara," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957), pl. 1 opposite p. 508, profile view. For an example with a halo that appears to belong to the original image, see [no author], *Chongshensi santa* (Three Pagodas at Chongshen Temple) (n.p.: Wenwu Press, 1984), 15.
5. The general appearance of the image, including the dress and ornamentation, may be compared with a representation of Avalokiteśvara from Bodhi Gaya dating from around the mid-ninth century. See S. Huntington, *The "Pala-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 102. However, the details of the style, including the proportions of the body and specific treatment of elements of costume and jewelry, differ. The Yunnanese image probably ultimately is derived from an earlier model than this ninth-century type.
6. Compare with S. Huntington, *The "Pala-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, figs. 161-162, 174, 252, and 265.
7. A slender body type is also characteristically Pallava, but Pallava figures often have longer, more tapered limbs. Therefore, it does not seem likely that the body type derives from a south Indian source.

8. For an example from Thailand, see Reginald Le May, *A Concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1962), fig. 44.
9. Chapin, "Yünnanese Images of Avalokiteśvara," 148-149.
10. Chapin, "Yünnanese Images of Avalokiteśvara," 152.
11. Chapin, "Yünnanese Images of Avalokiteśvara," 182.
12. Between the years 902 and 1253 there were twenty-eight rulers of the Dali kingdom. Twenty-three of them were Duan family rulers, whose reigns spanned the years 937 to 1253. See Appendix III, Chart 10.
13. The images do show some stylistic variation, but it is difficult to interpret these differences. For example, compare the facial features of the British Museum example with those of the image under discussion. For the British Museum piece, see Wladimir Zwalf, ed., *Buddhism: Art and Faith* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1985), 206, no. 297.
14. Chapin, "Yünnanese Images of Avalokiteśvara," 146. It has been suggested that there is a second fixed date in the chronology of the image, provided by scientific analysis. However, there are many problems associated with this date, which was ascertained by radiocarbon analysis of charcoal contained within the image in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art. The charcoal was presumed to represent the remains of relics and *dhāraṇī* that had been used to consecrate the image. See Wenley, "A Radiocarbon Dating of a Yünnanese Image of Avalokiteśvara," 508. While it is likely that relics and *dhāraṇī* were inserted into such images, the date of the charcoal in relation to the date of the image is problematic. First, the radiocarbon date indicating that the remains are 1500 years old plus or minus 250 years needs to be recalibrated in light of recent information about the accuracy of early radiocarbon dates. Further, depending on whether the wood from which paper or other materials had been made was taken from the core or outer part of a tree, the date could vary considerably. If taken from the heart of the tree, the specimen could give a date of two hundred or more years earlier than wood taken from the outer portions, depending on the age of the tree. The range of dates between 205 and 705 resulting from the radiocarbon testing (1500 years old plus or minus 250 years) therefore needs to be reconsidered. Further, Wenley assumed that the date of the charcoal and that of the image were the same, but it is likely that these charcoal materials were inserted into the image after it had been fire-gilded, since fire gilding requires temperatures that would reduce the charcoal to ash (assuming that some oxygen would be available to the contents of the image). The charcoal materials therefore might have been inserted into the image at a time other than the creation and gilding of the image. For example, it is possible that the charcoal was a relic preserved from an earlier image or source and had been reinserted into a later image.
15. It is hoped that some images contain materials that have not been damaged during a firing process.



### PART III

## THE PĀLA LEGACY ABROAD: THE TRANSMISSION TO NEPAL, TIBET, AND CHINA

"On the *klegs shing* (wooden cover placed on top of the manuscript) . . . attractive, appropriate images smile and look delighted and look like they are immediately going to speak to us. The images of animals are handsome and healthy-looking and frolicsome. The decorative spirals (*pad tra*) are pretty and delightful and clearly delineated. The gold paint is pure, clear, rich (in color), and bright. [One] never gets one's fill of looking [at it]."

A Tibetan appreciation of a carved  
wood book cover (cat. no. 132)



# NEPAL

# INTRODUCTION TO NEPAL

Nepal is in many ways an interface region between the two cultural centers of the Indic realm and the Tibetan realm of the Himalayan plateau (fig. 22). The land has been created by the collision between the Indo-Australian tectonic plate and the Eurasian plate, which resulted in the formation of the Himalayan mountains. Because of the tectonic action, the terrain of Nepal changes rapidly from the plains of the Terai through the foothills of the Himalayas to the peaks of the Himalayas that line its northern borders. The many steep and rugged valleys thus formed shelter diverse ethnic groups that trace their origins to one of the two great cultures at the northern and southern boundaries of Nepal. The Newari language (or *Nepālābhāṣā*), the language of the Bhotia-stock Mallas with whom we are primarily concerned, is most closely affiliated with the Tibetan linguistic family but is filled with Sanskrit loanwords. Just as the land and the language are best understood in a transregional context, the culture and art of the region may also be seen in one sense as an interface between its two powerful neighbors. However, to approach

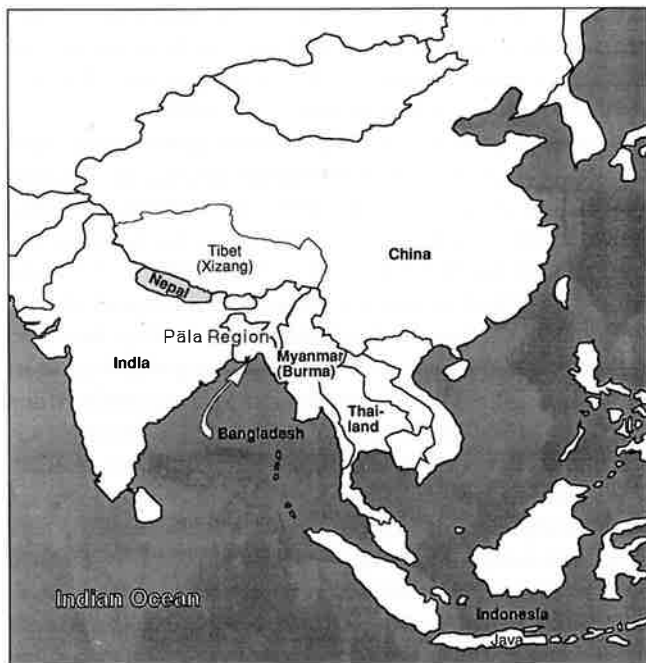


Figure 22. Map of Asia highlighting Nepal.



Figure 23. Map of Nepal and the Kathmandu Valley.

Nepali art in this light, as if it were purely derivative of its neighboring traditions, would be to miss some of its essential features and to do an injustice to the genius of the Nepali artists.

In contrast to the vast reaches of both India and the Tibeto-trans-Himalayan region that ranges from Ladakh in the west to Kham and Arunachal Pradesh in the east, the traditional Nepal that concerns us is a small place indeed. The modern political entity of Nepal did not come into existence until the middle of the eighteenth century. While other kingdoms of historical and cultural importance existed in the western part of the geographic region that is now known as Nepal, traditional Nepal was mostly limited to the approximately 150 square miles of the Kathmandu

Valley and the immediately surrounding environs (fig. 23). Geographically the valley was much smaller than most of the sparsely populated valley principalities of Tibet, yet because of the remarkable fertility of the basin it supported three cities and many smaller towns.<sup>1</sup> Due to the ruggedness of the surrounding mountains, outlying areas of the valley lacked the broad expanse of arable land necessary to support significant populations, and due to the same ruggedness the Kathmandu Valley was largely, but not totally, protected from the outside attacks suffered by both of its larger neighbors. The concentration of population and the relative safety from external forces produced a splendid isolation wherein ideas and cultural processes could be explored and developed to their fullest extent.

Cultural development in Nepal was further affected by the fact that the verdant valley lay across one of the main travel routes between Tibet and India. Traditional trade, dating from prehistoric times and continuing to the present day, continuously enriched the valley in a manner disproportionate to its size and political importance. Like the Silk Road cities of the Tarim Basin on the route between China and the Near Eastern and Mediterranean regions, Nepali rulers built their economies by exacting a toll or tax on sales and transactions conducted within their territories, providing them with abundant wealth for the pursuit of religious and civic works. In this environment one of the world's aesthetically richest and most dynamically creative artistic traditions evolved and developed, producing astonishingly beautiful works in all media through several complex periods.

## HISTORICAL SETTING

(For a political chronology of Nepal, see Appendix III, Chart 11.)

This history of the region, beginning with five (or eight) legendary or proto-historical kings of the Gopāla period, extends back into the middle of the first millennium B.C. and continued with the early Kirāti period (ca. fourth through first centuries B.C.). While nothing substantive is known of these periods, two significant legends are connected with the early Kirāti period. One is that during the time of his ministry (ca. 527-483 B.C.) Śākyamuni Buddha visited the site of Swayambhūnāth, which is still one of the major places of pilgrimage in the Kathmandu Valley, and the second is that the Mauryan emperor Aśoka (reigned 272-231 B.C.) visited the valley and founded Patan, while his daughter, who accompanied him on his visit, founded Cabahal. If nothing else, these legends demonstrate the belief that Nepal's culture was closely linked with that of India from a very early date.<sup>2</sup> The earliest art yet discovered in Nepal supports this traditional history.<sup>3</sup>

The first substantive traces of a culture that can be identified are those of the Licchavi rulers, who emerged as the dominant political group in the fourth century, having apparently moved into the valley from the plains of northern Bihar about A.D. 300. Whether these are the same Licchavis that figure in the life of Śākyamuni or another, perhaps collateral, branch is unknown. However, the early Licchavis, originally inhabitants of what is now Vaisali District and western sections of Samastipur District (just north of the Ganges River north of Patna), seem to have been the ancestors of the Nepali Licchavis. By the late sixth or early seventh century, the Nepali Licchavis' descent from the early Indian Licchavis is taken for granted.<sup>4</sup> Another dynasty, that of the Ābhira Guptas, dwelt in the valley and apparently contested with the Licchavis for control between 506 and 641. According to Mary Slusser, this may have been a resurgent Gopāla dynasty that was simply "reclaiming what the Licchavis had taken away."<sup>5</sup>

With the rise of Narendradeva (reigned 643-679), the Ābhira Guptas ceased to be a factor. It appears that Narendradeva may have gone to the Tibetan Yar lung court for aid and that Nepal may even have been a nominal vassal of Tibet for a time.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the political situation during the seventh and early eighth centuries, there were two cultural phenomena of great art historical significance to the subject of this catalogue. First, Kathmandu was the major intermediate point on the overland route through the Himalayas between Bihar and Tibet. It was a long and difficult journey, but one that could be accomplished and was undertaken with considerable regularity by many people. When there was relative peace in the valley, travel was safe. Second, the surviving works of art of the period demonstrate conclusively that the Nepalis had already melded the Gupta idiom with their own aesthetic genius and had created a basis for their aesthetic tradition that was to persist through the rest of its history.

For the period spanning the seventh through twelfth centuries, usually called the Thakurī period,<sup>7</sup> with which we are most concerned, there is regrettably little information. It seems that there was an invasion by the king (*rāja*) of the northern Bihar region of Tirhut (Tirabhukti) and perhaps a period of Tirhut rulership of the valley. However, the Tirhut overlordship has been called into question, and it has been suggested that their "rule" consisted of little more than a series of raids between 1097 and 1311. There is also the possibility that the Tirhut "invasion" was little more than a single raid, plundering the valley of treasure—mostly metal, and that after the raid the valley reverted to its preexisting conditions.

There are conflicting records as to when this invasion took place, and according to the most generally accepted accounts the political effect was not pronounced. The Tirhuti capital at Simraongarh (now in modern Nepal, see

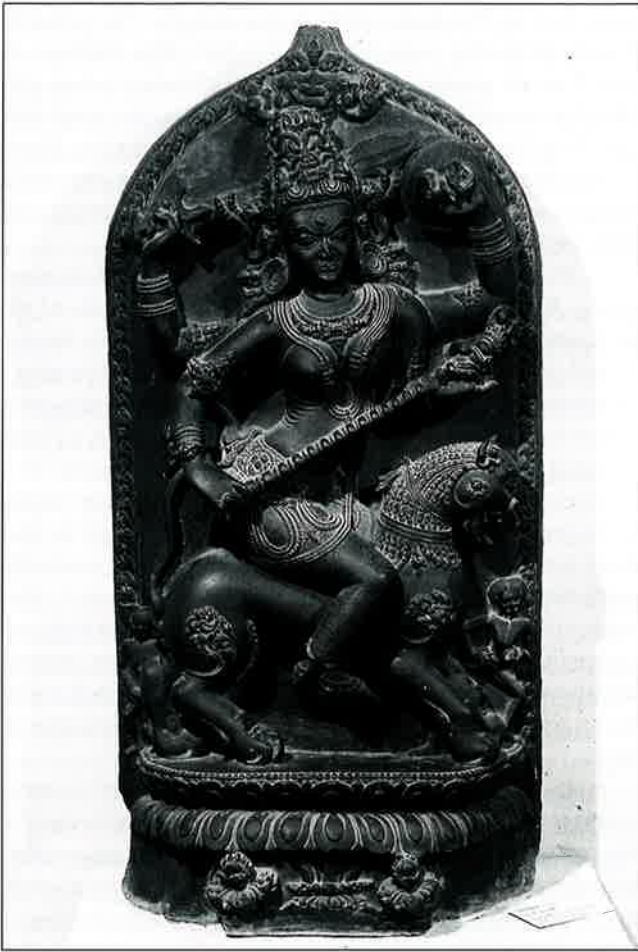


Figure 24. Durgā. From Simraongarh, Nepal. Ca. twelfth century. National Museum, Kathmandu.

fig. 23) has yielded a number of black stone sculptures of about the twelfth century that are very closely to the Pāla style (fig. 24) and yet contain a number of elements that indicate a transition between the Nepali and Pāla styles. Judging from these sculptures it must be assumed that there was intimate contact between the Pāla style and that of the Kathmandu Valley. It may well be that the small kingdom of Tirhut was the vehicle of transmission of the style into Nepal during this critical period. Resolution of this issue must await further research and the excavation of the site at Simraongarh.

Of singular importance is the visit of the Indian *mahāpāṇḍita* Atiśa to the valley in 1040 and his founding of Thām Bahal.<sup>8</sup> Atiśa is credited officially with introducing Tantric Buddhism into the Kathmandu Valley, but there are identifiably tantric works of art predating Atiśa's visit. Unfortunately, little remains of his visit except for Thām Bahal itself, but it has been extensively reconstructed. While Thām Bahal is reputed to contain many old manuscripts and images, it has not yet been possible for them to be examined by modern scholars.

The beginning of the Malla period is marked by the first inscriptions to use the title of *malla* (wrestler), namely, Arimalla (reigned 1200-1216).<sup>9</sup> There is no known association with the Mallas of the Buddhist period or with the Khasa Mallas of Dullu in west Nepal. As with the previous period, knowledge of this period is sparse. It was a period of ongoing raids, starting with the continued raids of the Tirhuts noted above, ending in 1311, alternating with at least six raids by the Khasa Mallas of Dullu (ranging from 1287 to 1334) and raids by others, especially the Palpa of western Nepal. Moreover, the flight of Harisimha of Tirhut to Nepal in 1324 as part of his effort to escape the raids by Ghiyās-ud-Dīn Tughluq and the subsequent raids by Shams ud-din of Bengal in 1344-1349 added to the general pattern of destruction. The constant looting and destruction of monuments must have kept the artisans of Nepal very busy, for even in this bleak period of constant destruction and devastation the arts flourished.

Just as Nepal seemed about to succumb to a permanent pattern of raids and invasions, a powerful figure emerged in the person of Sthitimalla (reigned 1382-1395), who demonstrated forceful leadership and consolidated the valley kingdom. At Sthitimalla's death, the rule was divided among his three sons and eventually passed to one of them, Jyotirmalla, in 1408. His rule inaugurated a period of unprecedented peace and prosperity. The kingdom passed to his son, Yakṣamalla, in 1428. From 1428 to 1482, Yakṣamalla's name appears in dozens of inscriptions dedicating the building of temples and shrines and many civic works.<sup>10</sup> During this period, the arts flourished as never before.

Unfortunately for the Kathmandu Valley, Yakṣamalla's death left all of his six sons to rule, presumably jointly. From their ascension in 1482 until the conquest of the valley by the Shah dynasty of Gorkha in 1769, the history of the kingdom is a tale of squabbling cousins forming temporary alliances and counter-alliances, never agreeing and yet cooperating in many joint family functions. As Slusser describes it, "during the period of the Three Kingdoms, the order of the day consisted of insults, feuds, quarrels and brief skirmishes of open warfare . . . accompanied by constant formulations of solemn treaties of [momentary] eternal friendship."<sup>11</sup> This situation continued through the whole of the Three Kingdoms period. Even up to the last, the kings of the various states haggled and bartered and treated with what was in reality their common enemy, the Gorkhalis. In 1769 Prithvi Narayan Shah established the Shah dynasty in Kathmandu. It continues to the present day.

The detailed history of Nepal during the Malla, or Three Kingdoms, period is mostly one of ongoing, festering minor wars, with eruptive battles, alliances of convenience, and continuous struggles for political domination. It is doubtful that any Nepali citizen of the Malla period lived



a lifetime free of the disruptions and fluctuations of fortune caused by the petty wars. Yet during this protracted, cankerous war, and despite—or perhaps because of—the political disruption that continued to occur, one of the world's most aesthetically pleasing and finely developed artistic traditions evolved and prospered.

Coupled with this prosperity in the arts was a commercial prosperity in trade with Tibet. Trading missions were common, and many Nepali firms established trade outposts in Tibet, especially at bKra shis lhun po and Lhasa. Nepali traders would go to Tibet and establish homes there, sometimes even taking Tibetan wives. Craft centers and ghettos of Nepalis thrived there, and some of these Nepali quarters have survived to the present day.

## THE PRACTICE OF BUDDHISM IN NEPAL

The comprehensive history of Buddhism in Nepal has yet to be written; however, judging from the extensive inscriptional evidence, even at a comparatively early date most Buddhist practices involved caste-oriented passage rites rather than the emphasis on individual spiritual attainment and relatively open monastic communities found in both Indic and Tibetan Buddhism. The reasons for this difference are difficult to discern.

As early as there any material remains of Buddhism in Nepal,<sup>12</sup> there is also proof of a dependency on Indian formulations and prototypes. Whether these remains are the "Aśokan" *stūpas*, the earliest extant Buddhist sculptures, or virtually any other Nepali Buddhist remains up through the twelfth century, a distinctive Indic character is present. During the first century of the post-Buddhist period in the Indic realms (ca. 1250-ca. 1350), there is an obvious continuation of Indic traditions in Nepal. This continuation represents the ongoing momentum of the tradition in Nepal and its reinforcement by the presence in the valley of Tibetan scholars who were intensely interested in the Indic Buddhist tradition as found in Bihar and Bengal. However, by the mid-fourteenth century Tibet took over as the Buddhist center and source of Buddhological information for the Nepalis. During this time and for a considerable period thereafter, Buddhist Newari craftsmen from Nepal served as artists in Tibet, and there is a style of Tibetan painting that is best known as the "Tibetan Nepali style" (in Tibetan, Bal bris, literally, "Nepali drawing"), primarily done by Tibetans but learned from and reinforced on a regular basis by artists visiting from Nepal. These artists in turn made and carried home sketchbooks containing drawings of deities and motifs not known in the Nepali schools. The *thyāsaphu*, or sketchbooks, are accordian-folded books usually made of heavy paper glued in several layers into continuous strips averaging about eight to twelve inches wide and ranging

from four or five feet to sixty feet in length. The paper is then folded into pages (see cat. no. 93). The infusion of non-Nepali elements is especially obvious when the sketches are of Chinese design, such as dragons (*long*) and the Four Heavenly Kings, or Si Tianwang (Ssu Tienwang); Skt. Caturmahārāja or Lokapālas), but many other designs for teachers and meditational deities apparently also were carried back to Nepal in this manner.

During this period of transition of Buddhological focus, Buddhism in Nepal lost most, if not all, of its monastic emphasis and evolved almost totally into a vehicle of caste identity, well-being, and rites of passage. The Newari Buddhist hierarchy is divided into two hereditary groups, the Vajrācāryas and Śākyas. These social divisions are known from inscriptions to have been instituted by the twelfth century, making them contemporaneous with some of the material in the exhibition. Community life revolves around the monastic associations centered at the local *bahals* (Skt. *viḥāra*). The ceremonial life is rich and extremely varied, even from one *bahal* to the next, and there are more than twenty different major ceremonies that may be performed, some on an annual basis, others as once-in-a-lifetime passage rites.

In one of the most important ceremonies,<sup>13</sup> young boys reaching the age of five, seven, or nine go through a rite of monastic initiation (Newari, *bare chuyegu*; Skt. *pravrajyāvṛata*) that is identical in function to a caste initiation.<sup>14</sup> Briefly, this consists of the rite of becoming a monk for a few days. In an elaborate ceremony, the novitiates have their heads shaved and are given a robe, a mendicant's staff, and a begging bowl and take seven ritual steps commemorating the seven steps of Gotama Siddhārtha immediately after his birth. From that point on, as a Śrāvākayāna practitioner, the youth must follow the monastic rules and restricted diet of the celibate monks of the Theravāda tradition (as interpreted in Nepal). After four days, the initiate returns to lay life by returning his bowl and staff to the officiating priest and taking off his robe. The return to lay life is marked by a feast signaling the return to an unrestricted diet and, by extension, ordinary familial and social life. He then enters the Mahāyāna path. For most of the Śākyas that is the end of the rite; however, for those who will be initiated as a Vajrācārya (tantric priest), an evening rite may immediately follow the initiation ritual. In this rite, songs and dances based on the esoteric symbolism of Cakrasaṃvara and other *anuttarayoga tantras* are performed. (See cat. no. 92 for a Nepali painting of Cakrasaṃvara that may have been produced for such a ritual.) Within this context of Mahāyāna/tantric initiation, the boys are then free to marry, live as householders, and engage in business, but are also tantric priests. From the reports of anthropological observers, there are no signs of the intense meditational

techniques, asceticism, reclusiveness, or involved theoretical study that characterize Pāla period Buddhist practice and the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

The *bahals* (Skt. *vihāras*) became more like guildhalls. Instead of being true monastic buildings housing monks who ministered to the laity while seeking for themselves Buddhist enlightenment, the *bahals* housed the ceremonial space (and on occasion the members themselves) of the hereditary guilds of the professions adopted by its members. In spite of the fact that the architecture and shrine images remained constant apparently from early Licchavi times, the images, practices, and ceremonies were adapted to function as caste initiations and prospering or protective talismans.

Given the “secularization” of Buddhist practice in Nepal, the various monastic associations undoubtedly would vie with one another in the quality and richness of their respective offerings. Further, individual donors could also be expected to succumb to the desire for ostentatious display. It was this caste ritual practice, combined with the impetus toward competitive donations, that was undoubtedly the driving force behind the richness of Nepali art. There is, to the present day, an intense interest in the art and a justified pride in the famous images of the *bahals*. This interest has even manifested itself in a ceremony known as Bahidyo Boyegu (literally, “exhibition of the gods of the *vihāra*”). For fifteen days in midsummer<sup>15</sup> the holdings of the *bahals* are displayed behind a latticed area on the main floor so that all who visit the *bahal* might admire and enjoy them. Some of the objects have been handed down for centuries and are truly remarkable pieces, the invaluable heritage of centuries of ceremonial life.

#### METHODOLOGY: THE DEFINITION OF STYLE IN NEPALI ART

For the most part, the history of Nepali art is one of internal development, rooted in the basic Indian religious traditions but dependent only on distantly removed contacts with Indic aesthetics, techniques, and stylistic conventions. There can be no doubt that the phenomenology of Indic religions provided almost all of the impetus for Nepali art. The whole panoply of Hindu and Buddhist iconography and even many minute details of the Indic spiritual universe fill the visual creations of the artists. Moreover, many of the social conventions of Indic society provide the impetus behind the production of many of the works. Therefore, there is a natural tendency for newcomers to the rich art of Nepal to see it simply as a northward extension of Indic cultural expression. Nothing could be further from the truth. However, just how much Nepali artists inherited from their neighbors and how much is indigenous is a matter of divided scholarly opinion and debate.

The influence of Pāla styles on Nepali art is itself an issue that has inspired polarized views. On one side are those who see a great deal of influence and consider Nepali art of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries to be in essence a subschool of Pāla art.<sup>16</sup> On the other side are those who assert that, “contrary to widely accepted opinion, Pāla influence on Nepalese art was minimal.”<sup>17</sup> Like the history of Nepal itself, the situation is far too complex to be summarized in a single phrase. If one examines the Nepali artistic tradition from various vantage points, different pictures emerge. In the following I set forth a methodological model that has proven very useful in interpreting Pāla influence on the art of Nepal, and if applied with caution it may also provide a basis for a more general analysis of Nepali art.<sup>18</sup>

For a modern western observer to understand how to examine traditional art and to know what factors are important to evaluate, it is crucial to consider how the art was understood in its own context. According to the traditional artist, any work was made up of three *discrete* components: 1) form, 2) colors and textures, and 3) composition.<sup>19</sup> “Form” refers to the representation of the figure(s), usually according to strict iconometric conventions. These conventions are well known, and recent publications of Buddhist iconographic diagrams demonstrate just how detailed and precise they are.<sup>20</sup> They are canonical or quasi-canonical, meaning that they *must* be followed to produce a “correct” or “true” image, allowing for very little room for variation of the basic form of figures, positions, and body types. For the sake of clarity I have coined the term “iconomorph,” literally, “image form,” to designate this convention.

The phrase “colors and textures” covers the broad range of technical and stylistic concerns having to do with actual pigments, treatments of textile patterns, botanical motifs, and landscape elements. For the most part these elements are discretionary and can be chosen by the artist and, to a lesser degree, by the patron. While the setting is generally dictated by the subject (e.g., Cakrasaṃvara must appear in a charnal field, while the Buddha-to-be in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* would normally be under the *bodhi* tree at Bodh Gayā), the details of the environment are dictated only by tradition and not by canon. These traditionally determined elements evolve slowly over a period of time and are subject both to ever-increasing elaboration and to occasional abrupt changes brought about by external influences or by “creative disruption” from within by artists embarking on new directions.

“Composition” refers to the selection of elements to appear in a work and the manner in which they will be arranged. For example, in the representation of Cakrasaṃvara in the Tibetan Bal bris style (cat. no. 117) there is a teaching lineage in a separate register across the top of the composition. Such a separate register depicting

a lineage is rarely, if ever, encountered in Nepali painting. In the Nepali Cakrasamvara (cat. no. 92), the transmission lineage is depicted in the form of yogis in the charnal fields surrounding the central figure. While in both paintings the presence of the lineage is didactic in purpose and therefore essentially iconographic, the placement of the figures in the painting is simply compositional. The Tibetan compositional convention places them in a register (even though they are understood to inhabit the charnal fields), while the Nepali compositional convention places them in the charnal fields. These compositional differences can take many forms, but like the discretionary elements they evolve slowly and become traditional.

These three artistic components represent only about half of the factors necessary to consider when analyzing Nepali art in its traditional context. The artworks must be divided on the basis of both religious and technological grounds as well. Hindu (that is, Vaiṣṇava, Śākta, and Śaivite) subjects and Buddhist subjects may differ substantially iconomorphically and evolve at different rates in terms of both discretionary elements and composition. Moreover, painting, metalworking, stone carving, and wood carving tended to be subject to different influences and to be unaffected by changes taking place in the other media. This created a very complicated situation. For example, a Pāla iconomorph may be introduced into a stone sculpture that has traditional Nepali discretionary elements and compositional features, or a Pāla iconomorph and discretionary elements may be introduced into a Tibetan-influenced composition produced by Nepali artists (cat. no. 91).

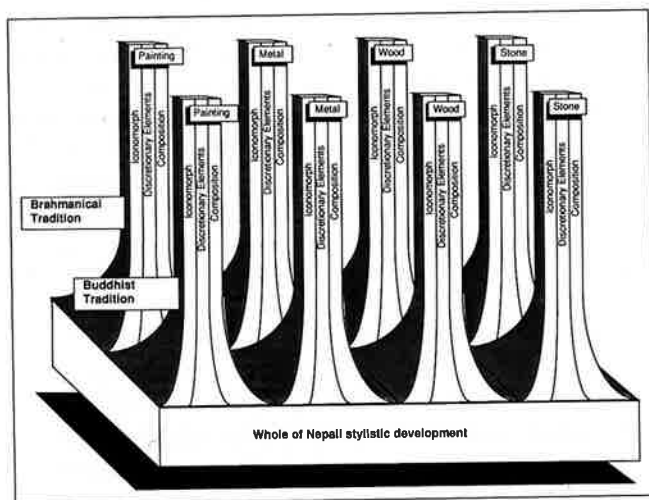


Figure 25. Schematic diagram of Nepali stylistic development.

These developments are not discrete or solitary events but a dynamic, ongoing process of internal evolution, external influence, and exchange of ideas. They perhaps are better expressed graphically (fig. 25). The whole of the

Nepali stylistic complex, involving all subject matter and all media, can be diagrammed as a set of parallel stylistic continua, divided on the basis both of religious content (Buddhist versus Hindu) and of medium, making a total of eight major divisions.<sup>21</sup> Each of these continua is made up of the three components. Pāla influence, or influence from any other source, would be expected to affect only one of these media, to affect either Hindu or Buddhist art, and to affect any combination from one to three of the stylistic components. Thus, any influence, even profound influence, would affect only one or perhaps two of these components in only one medium in only one religious tradition. Accordingly, the overall effect on the whole of Nepali style might be negligible, and the influence would be discernible only when examining works in that particular medium.

In the comparison of the art of the Kathmandu Valley with that of the Pāla kingdom, several trends appear to prevail. In stone sculpture, the earlier indigenous tradition of slender bodies and supple postures never gives way to the more static and heavier Pāla conventions. However, non-Nepali iconographic conventions appear to have been incorporated in an ongoing dialogue with the Pāla domains. In metal image making, local techniques of casting, local alloying conventions, and some local stylistic elements continue to be used until about the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, but Pāla influence inspires many changes and innovations. It is the painted manuscript illustrations that display the most dramatic Pāla influences. Sometime around 1100 or slightly later a Pāla stylistic convention literally overwhelmed the Nepali convention in manuscript painting and dominated Nepali painting until the mid-thirteenth century. In *pauba* (Skt. *paṭa*), the hanging scroll format of painting, the two traditions—the previously established Nepali compositional convention and the Pāla school—exist side-by-side, with the Pāla style employed primarily in the service of Tibetan patrons and the Nepali style serving the Nepali patrons.

In Nepal the attitude of the Newari artists to Indian prototypes was evidently quite different from that of the Tibetans. It is clear that in the ninth and tenth centuries Nepal had a vital and viable indigenous artistic tradition that was only collaterally related to the Pāla tradition. Apparently the Nepali and Pāla schools both had their roots in either the Gupta or earliest post-Gupta idioms, but the early history of this collateral development is unclear. What I call the "old school" in Nepal survived until relatively late in Newari Buddhist painting. When compared to the Pāla-derived school, the indigenous idiom can be seen to employ radically different compositional devices, displays much greater animation, and generally avoids the Pāla characteristic of bilateral symmetry (see cat. nos. 89 and 90). While there is ample evidence of trade between the Kathmandu Valley kingdoms and the Magadhan area, actual direct evidence of artistic influence

is lacking, even with the founding of Thām Bahal by Atīśa.

With the decline of the political fortunes of the Pālas and their successor dynasties, the Newari artists apparently saw and took advantage of the resultant economic opportunity. There was money to be made painting Pāla-style commissions for the Tibetans. Given the ongoing vitality of the Newari indigenous tradition, it was inevitable that the indigenous forms of rich decorative elaboration would be integrated into the borrowed idiom, and a new school soon resulted. These stylistic changes, or lack thereof, probably had more to do with what project was being patronized and by whom (that is, whether by Nepalis themselves or by Tibetans) than with purely religious considerations or the dictates of convention.

How then can Pāla influence on Nepali art be understood? The two media most strongly affected by Pāla influence were metalworking and painting. Wood carving retained much of its early Nepali character throughout its history, and stone carving remained more independent with primarily iconographic influence.<sup>22</sup> In these latter two media only iconographic and minor discretionary modifications appeared. In both painting and metalworking there were essentially two major, parallel stylistic traditions: the indigenous school and the Pāla-derived school. The indigenous traditions of composition, discretionary elements, and (probably) iconography survived until the fifteenth or sixteenth century in both. It is in Nepali painting that the Pāla influence is most profound. Such paintings as the Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 92) and Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa (cat. no. 94) have neither compositions nor iconography in the "old school" Nepali manner. Only in their discretionary elements are minor, mostly decorative, Nepali traits to be observed. By comparing them to Early Shar mthun bris paintings in Tibet, paintings that are demonstrably Pāla-based in all aspects, it becomes apparent that both the Cakrasaṃvara and the Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa paintings are predominantly Pāla-derived. These same paintings can be contrasted with the paintings in the "indigenous style," such as the *Gaṇḍavyūha* manuscript (cat. no. 89) and the Śiva manuscript cover (cat. no. 90).

The interactions and distinctions between the Pāla and the indigenous styles will be discussed in more detail in the following catalogue entries.

1. Although most other areas of what is modern Nepal had traditional populations, only one had been a major civilizational center comparable to the Kathmandu Valley, and it was short-lived. Near the town of Dullu, Tucci and his party discovered some stelae belonging to a dynasty of Malla kings with a royal genealogy of about thirty-four kings. It was founded in the twelfth century by Nagadeva Malla, who replaced a local dynasty of Tibetans descended from the ancient kings of Lhasa. The kingdom lasted until the fourteenth century and then vanished, save for its inscriptions. Giuseppe Tucci, *Nepal: The Discovery of the Malla* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1962), 58-65.
2. The importance of these stories in this context is what they reveal about later

Nepali views of associations with India, rather than their historical accuracy. However, neither legend is outside the realm of historical possibility. The Buddha travelled widely throughout north India, and a journey of a few days into the Kathmandu Valley is certainly possible and even likely. Aśoka is well known for having travelled across much of his empire and is known from surviving inscriptions to have visited Lumbini in the Nepali Terai. Further, there are four *stūpas* in the city of Patan of the low hemispheric type characteristic of early *stūpas* associated with Aśoka. Thus, either or both of these events reasonably could have taken place. There are *stūpas* as associated with the former Buddhas, especially Kanakamuni and Kāśyapa, in the Nepal regions. One was refurbished by Aśoka, and a Maurya period epigraph records the event. Although most modern scholars are skeptical about the existence of "former Buddhas," the primary evidence for at least two of them is identical in quality to that of the Mauryan inscriptions identifying the holy sites associated with Śākyamuni (i.e., traditional associations and Mauryan epigraphs). It is possible that they existed, and it is within the realm of possibility that Śākyamuni may have made a pilgrimage to sacred sites of the former Buddhas, although we will probably never know for certain. It is hard to imagine any potential evidence that might remain from such a pilgrimage, beyond the legend itself. However, Aśoka's visit to the region conceivably might one day be substantiated by excavation of these *stūpas* or of Cabahal.

3. Lain S. Banglel, *The Early Sculptures of Nepal* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982).
4. Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 22.
5. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, 28.
6. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, 32-36.
7. See Appendix III, Chart 11, n. 1. According to the scheme established by Slusser, what is usually called the First Period of the Thakuris comes under the Licchavi period, while the Second and Third Periods of Thakuri rule is called the Transitional Period.
8. Since so little is known about the Nepal leg of his journey, Atīśa's visit to Nepal will be discussed in the context of his trip to Tibet, where biographies of him were written and a considerable amount of detail is known about his trip.
9. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, 52-53.
10. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, 61.
11. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, 63. My brackets.
12. There is a remote possibility that Nepal (presently defined) was actually the homeland of Buddhism as we know it. If the two great *stūpas* of Svayambhūnātha and Bodhnātha are actually *stūpas* of former Buddhas, as legend holds that they are, then Gotama Siddhārtha may well have been the successor to a line of enlightened beings whose main area of activity was the valleys of Nepal. As noted above, modern scholarship rejects this notion out-of-hand, even though the pre-excavation evidence for the existence of Śākyamuni Buddha is no better than that for the former Buddhas. Even though several *stūpas* of former Buddhas are known, no excavation has ever been undertaken to verify their existence. See also note 2 above.
13. Karunakar Vaidya, *Buddhist Traditions and Culture of the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal)* (Kathmandu: Shajha Prakashan, 1986), gives a brief survey of many of them.
14. The following is summarized from David N. Gellner, "Monastic Initiation in Newar Buddhism," in *Indian Ritual and its Exegesis*, ed. Richard F. Gombrich, *Oxford University Papers on India* 2, pt. 1 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988): 42-112.
15. The date is determined by the traditional lunar calendar and therefore subject to variation in the solar Gregorian calendar presently in use in the West.
16. Ernst Waldschmidt and Rose Leonore Waldschmidt, trans. by David Wilson, *Nepal: Art Treasures from the Himalayas* (London: Elek Books, 1969), 42.
17. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, 46.
18. Although Kashmiri art would initially seem to represent a parallel situation of art produced by a culture of limited size in an enclosed environment, this model does not apply to the art of Kashmir. I think that is attributable to three reasons: 1) Kashmir is not comparably isolated, since access to it both from the northwest and from greater Indian regions was much freer; 2) the valley of Kashmir is vastly larger and richer than the valley of Kathmandu and therefore able to support a much larger population, creating the need for more stable and powerful political institutions; and 3) a whole different array of distinctive influences came to Kashmir, especially from the northwest, that intermingled with iconographic conventions from India and produced a distinctive tradition that is easily and quickly recognizable as an intrinsically independent style.
19. Following the contemporary traditional Tibetan artist Gega Lama. See Gega Lama, *Principles of Tibetan Art: Illustrations and explanations of Buddhist iconography and iconometry according to the Karma Gardri School*, 2 vols. (Darjeeling: Jamyang Singe, 1983), vol. 1, 47. Also see Introduction to Tibet and China for further discussion of the statement in the Tibetan context.



20. For example, see the illustrations in Gega Lama, *Principles*.
21. Ceramic sculpture has a rightful place in this discussion, but so little information is available about it that I cannot be certain whether it follows the patterns I am describing.
22. Since most of what remains from the Pāla period are stone and metal images, comparisons must be made among objects of different media. Wooden sculpture, which was undoubtedly the predominant medium in Pāla India, is known from only a few surviving sculptures, such as two now in the Dhaka Museum.

# CATALOGUE OF NEPALI OBJECTS

89

## LEAVES FROM A MANUSCRIPT OF THE *GAṆḌAVYŪHA* TEXT

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley, Traditional ("pre-Pāla Influence") Nepali school

Ca. eleventh century, second period of rule by the *ṭhakurīs* (chieftains)

Water-based pigments on talipot palm leaf

H: 2" W: 21 1/2"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.54.1-4)

Illustrated in color and black-and-white

Scattered through public and private collections across the United States and beyond are Nepali manuscript folios from a *Gaṇḍavyūha* manuscript that are of unsurpassed historical importance. Identified as late eleventh-century or early twelfth-century Nepali by the distinctive ligatures (letter forms) of the script, the manuscript is the only known early Nepali version of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, a major subsection of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.<sup>1</sup> The *Gaṇḍavyūha* narrates the pilgrimage of the youth Sudhana in his quest for enlightenment. The text is a narrative of his travels from one teacher (Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*, literally, "good friend") to the next, each imparting the next level of instruction to him. In the culminating visit, Sudhana visits the Bodhisattva Maitreya, who grants him a vision of universal reality in the form of Vairocana's Tower, a jewelled tower wherein each jewel contains another tower, in which each jewel contains another tower, *ad infinitum*, demonstrating to Sudhana that all phenomena and experiential realms coexist without obstructing one another in space or time.

The paintings in the surviving manuscript folios are apparently illustrations of Sudhana's encounters with various teachers. Because of the dispersal of the manuscript folios, it unfortunately has not been possible to assemble the leaves in their intended order.<sup>2</sup> Since there is no standard iconography of the events depicted in the illustrations on the leaves, it is impossible even to make meaningful suggestions regarding the specific encounters depicted.

This remarkable manuscript of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is a

major document of a Nepali painting idiom that might otherwise have been lost. The elegant drawings of Sudhana and his teachers are done in a style that appears to be a continuation of an earlier Nepali tradition and have been included in the exhibition to provide a contrast to the Pāla tradition. These differences in Nepali painting must be noted in spite of the apparent similarity to Pāla painting, which itself derived from a similar palm leaf formal technique and palette. The style is characterized by the litheness, lively postures, and animated turning in space of the figures. This anatomical and attitudinal positioning is clearly evident in the illustration in which Sudhana is seated before a male figure with a *stūpa* between them. The figure of Sudhana turns in space, so that his legs and body are more or less in three-quarter position while his face is nearly in profile view.

The two figures of Sudhana with trees (scenes of his travels between teachers?) both show an extremely varied and lively quality far different from what one might expect in the known paintings of the Pāla school. Even in a composition centering on a Buddha (fig. 26), wherein the Pāla traditional hieratic, formal, and relatively stiff conventions invariably apply, the images of Sudhana and his counterpart are dynamically balanced against each other.



Figure 26. Painting of Buddha, on leaf from *Gaṇḍavyūha* manuscript. Ca. eleventh century. Seattle Art Museum.

In contrast to the animated quality of the composition, several of the stylistic elements of the paintings do closely approximate Pāla characteristics. For example, the palette is limited to a few dominant colors, and there is considerable use of empirical shading. The figures, like their Pāla counterparts, are richly adorned with jewelry. However, compared with later Nepali examples, the ornamentation of the figures seems minimal (compare with cat. no. 91). Like the Pāla convention, trees and other subsidiary elements in the compositions are highly geometricized and suggest that the Nepali and Pāla traditions may have had a common ancestor or that there may already have been influence from the Pāla areas on Nepali painting.

Virtually identical to the Pāla idiom, the red and blue backgrounds of the compositions are essentially monochromatic, although many of the blue backgrounds are not strictly "monochromatic" because they have black dots sprinkled evenly across the surface. A study of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* itself suggests that these scenes may be night scenes, of which there are many in the text, and that the black dots were placed there for their darkening effect. In Indian painting the black dots seem to have other purposes as well. The use of dark dots, apparently to lower the value of a background, occurs in Pāla manuscript paintings that illustrate daytime events that explicitly did not take place during the rainy season. For example, see the descent from Trāyastriṃśa scene in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript with the colophon date of the eighteenth regnal year of King Rāmapāla (cat. no. 57). This example would indicate that in Pāla painting the use of the dark dots must have had other functions. However, in the case of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* manuscript under discussion, it apparently has previously been unnoticed that the paintings with a blue background and black dot stippling, all known examples of which illustrate visits to *kalyāṇamitras*, have

a curtain or canopy above the figures, as if they were under some sort of an enclosure, entirely in keeping with a night scene.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the darker complected figures display a kind of empirical shading. This is done extremely subtly around the joints and edges of the body, but is particularly noticeable in the highlighting of the faces (leaves two and three). Such shading is also apparent in many Indian manuscripts (see cat. no. 57) and is an important feature in the transitional Shar mthun bris (see cat. no. 110). The roots of the convention are definitively eastern Indian and Nepali and may have precedents in earlier central Indian painting.

The major stylistic elements of composition, bodily postures, and animation seen in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* manuscript seem to have deep roots in the Nepali artistic tradition. While actual paintings in the Nepali tradition that predate this manuscript are lacking, stone sculptures dating from as early as the eighth and ninth centuries share many stylistic characteristics with these paintings. For example, the sixth-century Śiva and female attendants from the Kaṅkeśvarī temple of Durgā (fig. 27) and the devotees of Śiva mounted in the wall at the Sighe Bahal in Kathmandu (fig. 28) exhibit the same kind of animated



Figure 27. Śiva and devotee. From Kaṅkeśvarī (Durgā) Temple. Kathmandu, Nepal. Ca. sixth century.



Figure 28. Devotees of Śiva. Sighe Bahal. Kathmandu, Nepal. Ca. sixth century.

postures, turning of the figures in space, and lively attitudes as the *Gaṇḍavyūha* paintings. Indeed, metal images of the tenth century and earlier also exhibit many of the same characteristics, suggesting the existence of a uniform style. This dynamic vitality of Nepali art seems to have been an early indigenous trait that persisted throughout its history to the present day, making it a major and in many cases identifying characteristic of the Nepali artistic tradition.

The ultimate sources for the tradition go back to the Gupta idiom of the fifth century, which apparently dominated much of the northern subcontinent. Comparisons of the Nepali *Gaṇḍavyūha* paintings with the major surviving Gupta period paintings, the wall



paintings at Ajañṭā, are not particularly fruitful except in a very general sense. Both the scale of conception and the coloration are radically different. However, the animated quality, the turning of the figures in three-dimensional space, and some of the rendering techniques are strikingly similar.

PARTIAL LIST OF PUBLISHED LEAVES FROM THE  
GAṆḌAVYŪHA MANUSCRIPT:

Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal* (New York: Asia Society, 1964), 100, 144; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 105, no. 110; Henry Trubner, *Asiatic Art in the Seattle Museum* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1973), 113, no. 41 (treats it as a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Bengal); Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, vol. 2, *Painting* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1978), 37, 42, 47-48, 94, 117, figs. 34-36; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 27; Sherman Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall and Harry N. Abrams, 1982), color pl. 9; Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, [1985], 57, 195-197; Linda S. Ferber, Diana Fane, Richard A. Fazzini, Robert S. Bianchi, James F. Romano, Amy G. Poster, Sheila R. Canby, *The Collector's Eye: The Ernest Erickson Collections at The Brooklyn Museum* (Brooklyn, N. Y.: The Brooklyn Museum, 1987), 170-171; Pratapaditya Pal and Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Buddhist Book Illuminations* (New York and Paris: Ravi Kumar and Richard Lyon-Chimera, [1988]), 117-118, pl. 25, fig. 42.

1. Brian H. Hodgson, who spent many years as British Minister at the court of Nepal during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, in his *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet* (1874; reprint, Varanasi: Bharat-Bharati Publishers, 1971), reports (pp. 12-14) that the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is one of the Navadharmas (nine Dharmas) of Newari Buddhism, which suggests an importance far beyond what a single surviving manuscript might suggest. The Navadharmas are: 1) *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, 2) *Gaṇḍavyūha*, 3) *Daśabhūmiśvara* [*Daśabhūmika*], 4) *Samādhirañja*, 5) *Lankāvatāra*, 6) *Saddharmapuṇḍarika*, 7) *Tathāgataguhyaka*, 8) *Lalitavistara*, and 9) *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*. Of these, Hodgson states, "Divine worship is constantly offered to these nine works, as the 'Nava Dharma,' by the Bauddhas of Nepal. . . . it [worship] was originally dictated by a just respect for the pre-eminent authority and importance of these works" (p. 13). Hodgson goes on to state that he was able to obtain copies of all of the above-listed works.
2. The leaves are unpaginated. Only a complete study of the text on the leaves, assuming they can all be located, will allow the restoration of the order of the manuscript. It is regrettably a common practice among art dealers to destroy or to store away the unillustrated leaves of manuscripts, and it may be that some of the leaves from the manuscript will never be located.
3. Fig. 26 shows a Buddha in *dhyaṇa mudrā* attended by two devotees(?) or Bodhisattvas(?)—the left one of which appears to be Sudhana—in which

there is no canopy above the night scene. However as a Buddha's teachings are often delivered at night, this does not refute the hypothesis that the stippled blue background scenes refer to night scenes. The suggestion by Pal (*Arts of Nepal*, vol. 2, 48) that the dots are rain is not in keeping with the narrative of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, nor is simple rain a common occurrence in Buddhist literature. Indeed, Buddhist activities are curtailed by the rainy season, and inclement weather would not seem to be appropriate to scenes where Sudhana was receiving further instructions leading toward enlightenment.

90

BOOK COVER DEPICTING UMĀ-MAHEŚVARA  
WITH THE BULL NANDI AND A SERVANT,  
ATTENDED BY VIṢṆU, BRAHMĀ, AND FOUR  
OTHER GODS

Nepal, Pāla-influenced indigenous style

Ca. twelfth century, third period of rule by the *ṭhakurīs* (chieftains)

Water-based pigments on unidentified wood

H: 2 1/2" W: 22 1/4"

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Williams Fund  
(84.115)

Shown in Dayton only

Illustrated in color

Wooden book covers of this type were used at both the top and bottom of stacks of palm leaves that made up the *tālpātras* (literally, "palm-book"), or *tāḍapatra*-style books. The insides of both covers were frequently painted either with the major iconographic themes of the book, closely related auspicious figures, or a general subject appropriate to the contents of the book. For example, any Śaivite text could have an image of Umā-Maheśvara on the inside of the cover, even though Umā-Maheśvara might not occur in the contents of the book. As the supreme god of Śaivism, Śiva is the progenitor of the whole and therefore appropriate to the cover of any book on the subject. Śiva accompanied by Umā (Pārvatī) is a particularly auspicious motif, because marriage with Umā is what allowed Śiva's potent yogic energies to be harnessed constructively.

This book cover is one of the few surviving examples of early Nepali Śaivite painting. The painting style is far removed from the Buddhist works of the same period and yet is rooted in the same traditions. While the basic format, composition of the central panel and six attendant gods, and background color convention are all Pāla-derived, the figures are much more freely drawn and the animate quality is much more pronounced than most Pāla examples and most (but not all) Nepali Buddhist examples. The lively drawing and figural convention are attributable to a continuation of the indigenous, pre-Pāla-influence style. Other elements are distinctively Nepali and have no counterpart in the sub-Himalayan Indic regions, such as the intertwined coil of *nāga* bodies behind the *nāgarāja* at the left end of the cover. This too is probably a holdover from a pre-Pāla school. The details of the *prabhāvalīs*



(auras) around the figures are known from Tibetan paintings that are closely based on the Pāla schools (see cat. no. 110), but not from surviving paintings of any known Pāla school. In the Pāla schools, the *prabhāvalī*s are usually a flat oval of color with a line or two of different colors or sometimes slight shading around the inside of the rim (see cat. nos. 58 and 59). Whether the rainbow-rimmed *prabhāvalī* is derived from the indigenous Nepali tradition or from a now-lost Pāla tradition of including such an aura in major paintings is unknown. Because similar auras are found in the earlier paintings of Central Asia, it is likely that it actually was derived from the greater Gupta tradition and that it therefore was part of the pre-Pāla Nepali school.

#### PUBLISHED:

Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Shiva* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981), 187, no. P-25.

91

#### FOLIO WITH AN IMAGE OF MAHĀŚĪTAVATĪ OR MAHĀMĀYŪRĪ FROM A MANUSCRIPT OF A PAÑCARAKṢĀ TEXT

Nepal, "Internalized Pāla tradition"

Ca. thirteenth century, early Malla period

Water-based pigments on Tibetan-style paper

H: 2 5/8" W: 6 1/2"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates Purchase (M.72.1.52.b)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Illustrated in color

The Pañcarakṣā goddesses are protective emanations of the Jina Buddhas who can be invoked against specific illnesses and for specified purposes. Their correspondence with the Jinās varies in different *sādhana*s, making it difficult to confirm their identities and functions.<sup>1</sup> Marie-Thérèse de Mallman provides two schemes of correspondences:<sup>2</sup>

Since both sets of iconographic texts are of equal importance, the only possible clarification here might

Jina Buddha	Goddess	Protects Against
Akṣobhya	Mahāmantrānusāriṇī	(evils not given)
Ratnasambhava	Mahāpratisarā	
Amitābha	Mahāśītavatī	
Amoghasiddhi	Mahāmāyūrī	
Vairocana	Mahāsāhasrapramardanī	

come from the text accompanying the illustrations. Since much of it is missing and other leaves from the manuscript have been dispersed to other collections, it has not been possible to make such a determination. Therefore, because of the impossibility of making a determination at this time, the identification of the figure must remain as "Mahāśītavatī or Mahāmāyūrī."

According to Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, the Pañcarakṣā text and the goddesses are particularly popular in Nepal, where virtually every Buddhist household owns a copy of the text.<sup>3</sup> This popularity in Nepal may have ancient origins, and therefore it is probable that this manuscript, which is in Nepali characters of the thirteenth century, was intended for Nepali users rather than Tibetan patrons. This would seem to provide evidence that the Pāla-based tradition of Nepali painting was put to use for Nepali patrons as well.

This painting clearly demonstrates the Pāla heritage and is especially related to Nālandā idiom, particularly as seen in metal sculpture, as seen in the treatment of the figure and the surrounding *prabhāvalī*. The blue background with the "rain of flowers" and the bold, geometric treatment of the foliage are characteristics found in some examples of Pāla painting. Only the animation of the attending figures and the upturned corners of the lowest element of the pedestal are definitively Nepali features and may be continuities from the pre-Pāla Nepali school. The image is rendered with a certainty and mastery that make it obvious that the style has been fully internalized. It is also the style that predominates in the gTsang Valley of Tibet, as seen in a painting of Vajrasattva in the Transitional Shar mthun bris style (cat. no. 111).

By the thirteenth century, Buddhism had been virtually destroyed in the eastern Indic regions by the brutal raids of the Turks under the rapacious Bakhtyār Khaljī at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries. When Dharmasvāmin visited Bodhi Gayā in 1235, little was left of the many Buddhist monasteries (Skt. *viḥāras*) and monastic universities (Skt. *mahāvihāras*) that once had flourished throughout what is now Bihar. Because of this devastation, the Indian Buddhist community that escaped the sword had scattered and the Tibetans had lost what they considered their primary source of Buddhological information. As longstanding patrons of Nepali artists, the Tibetans

Jina Buddha	Goddess	Protects Against
Vairocana	Mahāpratisarā	sins and illnesses
Akṣobhya	Mahāsāhasrapramardanī	demons
Ratnasambhava	Mahāmāyūrī	serpents
Amitābha	Mahāmantrānusāriṇī	illnesses
Amoghasiddhi	Mahāśītavatī	vicious animals and dangerous insects

naturally turned to the one artistic source that remained for them, that is, Nepal. They demanded accurate replicas of the Pāla style, which they could judge against the many imported Pāla artifacts already in Tibet and against the productions of their own Shar mthun school, which since its inception had replicated a nearly purely Pāla idiom of painting.

This folio belongs to one of the earliest surviving paper manuscripts from South Asia. It is probable that the paper on which this manuscript is made reflects direct Tibetan technical influence on the Nepali school. The Tibetans apparently learned paper making from the Chinese substantially before the date of this manuscript and seem to have transmitted the technique to the Nepalis by no later than the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century. This was the inception of the Nepali paper-making tradition, which is justifiably famous for its quality to the present day. In contrast, Indian painting and Nepali painting in imitation of Indian painting were done on palm leaves, and paper did not come into importance in India until the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

#### PUBLISHED:

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 107-108, no. 118 (published as "east Indian"); Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, vol. 2, *Painting* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1978), 49-50, fig. 27; G. J. Larson, P. Pal, and R. P. Gowen, *In Her Image* (Santa Barbara: University of California, 1980), 56; Pratapaditya Pal, "Early Paintings of the Goddess in Nepal," *Ars Orientalis* 12 (1981), 43, fig. 4; Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, [1985]), 59, 200-201; Pratapaditya Pal and Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Buddhist Book Illuminations* (New York and Paris: Ravi Kumar and Richard Lyon-Chimera, [1988]), 104, 114.

1. In his identification of the figures in the Los Angeles collection, Pal seems to have overlooked the problematic aspect of the identification. Furthermore, his identification of the Buddha accompanying these figures in the Los Angeles collection as Śākyamuni is incorrect. The Buddha is Ratnasambhava; he sits on a throne supported by horses and makes *varada mudrā*. See Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, [1985]), 200-201.
2. Marie-Thérèse de Mallman, *Introduction à l'Iconographie du Tāntrisme Bouddhique*, Bibliothèque du Centre de Recherches sur l'Asie Centrale et la Haut Asie, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1975). The first table is compiled from information on pp. 289-290 and the second table is compiled from information on pp. 290-294.
3. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography: Mainly Based on the Sādhana-mālā and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Rituals*, reprint with corrections (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), 302.

92

#### CAKRASAMVARA WITH VAJRAVĀRĀHĪ AND THE DEITIES OF THEIR MAṆḌALA

Nepal, probably Kathmandu Valley

Ca. late fourteenth or fifteenth century, early Malla period

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 37 1/4" W: 28 7/8"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Illustrated in color

(Note: The presence in the exhibition of another version of this iconography in the mature Tibetan Bal bris idiom [cat. no. 117] provides an exceptional opportunity for detailed stylistic comparison. Those interested in such a comparison are encouraged to examine the paintings concurrently. See also Appendix II.)

In the traditions of the Mahāsiddhas, no single deity is more important than Cakrasamvara in union with his female Buddha consort, Vajravārāhī (fig. 29, 1 & 2).

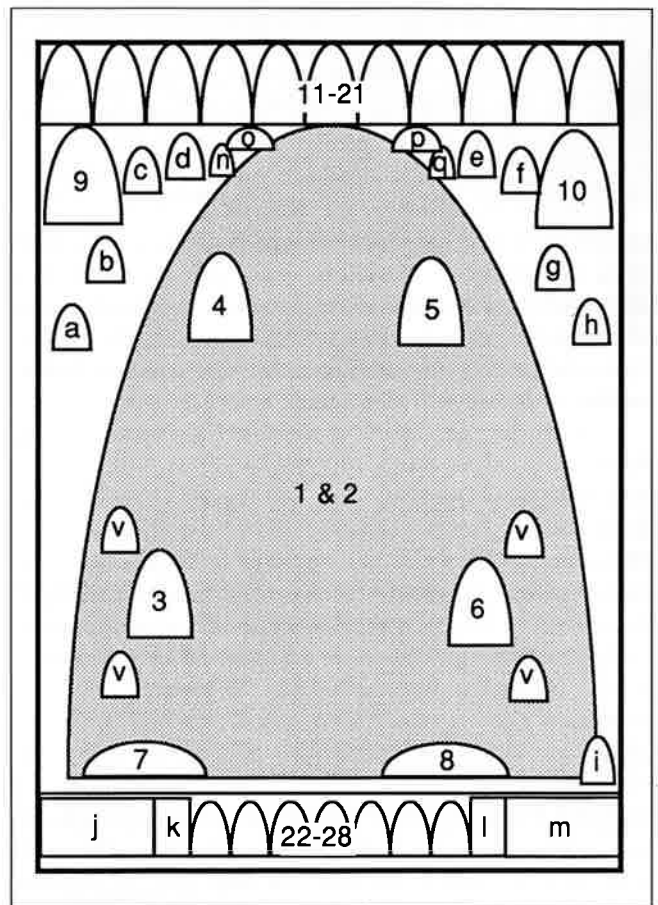


Figure 29. Diagram of cat. no. 92.

Meditation and ritual focusing on Cakrasamvara and Vajravārāhī occur throughout Tibetan and Nepali Buddhism, and because of their importance I have selected

them to illustrate the intensely detailed complexity and meaning of the sexual symbolism found in the iconography of this class of deities. Accordingly, a detailed description of this iconography can be found in Appendix II.

Accompanying the central figures in the central area are the four "inner yoginis" (3-6) and four vases of generation on the innermost petals of the *maṇḍala*. On the eastern petal there is blue *Ḍākinī* (3), to the north there is green *Lāmā* (6),<sup>1</sup> to the west there is red *Khaṇḍarohā* (5), and to the south there is yellow *Rūpiṇī* (4). Each of these female deities is one-faced and four-armed and carries a *ḍamaru* (pellet drum often made of two human crania glued back-to-back) in the upper right hand, a *karṭṭṛkā* (flaying knife) in the lower right hand, a *kapāla* (skull cup, generally filled with blood) in the left hand in front of the figure, and a *khatvāṅga* (a staff with three heads and a double *vajra* impaled on it) in the second left hand. On the intermediate petals are four vases (v) made of precious metals and filled with the water of the transcendental insights (Skt. *jñānavarūṇa*).<sup>2</sup> Trampled beneath the feet of *Cakrasaṃvara* are the red, emaciated figure of *Kālarātri* (7) and the dark blue-black (Skt. *kr̥ṣṇa*) *Bhairava*<sup>3</sup> lying facedown (8), who represent the extremes of *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* (see Appendix II).

To either side of the central couple are two additional Heruka-class Buddhas in *yab yum* form, one of whom I have been unable to identify (9) and *Kālacakra* (10). Each of the two secondary Herukas is featured in his own tantric texts and practices and usually would be found in the center of his own *maṇḍala*. Accompanying the central image here, they probably constitute a triad of father, mother, and nondual Herukas.<sup>4</sup>

Surrounding the central figure of *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Vajravārāhī* is the flame of transcendental insight (Skt. *mahājñānāgnī*) (see grey area in diagram),<sup>5</sup> and behind that are the eight charnal fields (Skt. *śmaśāna*). These are often inaccurately called "graveyards" in English literature on the subject. In South Asia in general,<sup>6</sup> and especially in the context of the Buddhist tradition, the deceased are not buried; accordingly, there are no "graves" or graveyards at all. In both India and Nepal, the charnal field is a cremation *ghāt* or raised area, usually on the bank of a river (such as the famous burning *ghāts* at *Vārāṇasī*). In Tibet the method of disposal of the dead is to cut up the body and feed it to carrion-eaters, such as ravens, vultures, and wild dogs. In both of these contexts there is a much more intimate familiarity with the dead and, by western standards, relatively gruesome reminders of human mortality. Thus, in the painted depictions of the charnal fields such as these, there are skeletons and bones strewn on the ground. Cremation fires rage (n, q), and corpses have been unceremoniously abandoned where they fell (o, p), while energetic, well-fed dogs, jackals, vultures, and other carrion-eaters gambol about looking for their next

meal. The whole landscape is dotted with tiny *stūpas*, commemorative monuments to the enlightened beings who have gone before, serving as reminders of the goal of enlightenment. This detailed symbolism renders the visualized charnal fields very vivid, tangible, and replete with the harmful forces that must be overcome on the journey into the *maṇḍala*.

The specific charnal fields are, to the east, *Caṇḍogra* (Gruesome and Horrible); to the south, *Gahvara* (Thicket); to the west, *Vajrajvāla* (Adamantine Flame, i.e., of the cremation fire that destroys all material attachments); and to the north, *Karaṅkin* (Having Skeletons). In the intermediate directions they are, to the northeast, *Aṭṭahāsa* (Wild Laughter); to the southeast, *Lakṣmīvana* (Forest of Happiness); to the southwest, *Ghorāṇḍhakāra* (Terrible Gloom); and to the northwest, *Kilikilārava* (Joyous Cries of 'Kilikili').<sup>7</sup> From the names alone one gains insight into the psychological atmosphere of the meditational environment. Although not drawn with identifiable specificity in the painting, in written iconography each charnal field has its characteristic tree. The eight trees, starting in the eastern charnal field, are *śirīṣa*, *aśvattha*, *karikelli*, *cūta*, *vaṭa*, *karañjaka*, *parkaṭi*, and *pārthiva*.<sup>8</sup> In some cases these are *bodhi* trees (Skt. *bodhivṛkṣa*) of former Buddhas<sup>9</sup> and in other cases presumably trees under which other potential Buddhas might become enlightened.

The natural inhabitants of the charnal fields are the *Mahāsiddhas*, whose presence is prescribed by iconographic texts. The identifiable *Mahāsiddhas* present in the painting are *Nāgārjuna* (a), *Virūpa* (c), *Lūipa* (?) (f), *Kukkuripa* (g), *Saraha* (h), and in a curious, lower position possibly indicating that he is actually the patron of the painting, a *Mahāsiddha*-like figure not recognizable from the usual iconographies (i). These identified figures all are prominent in the Heruka transmission lineages, especially that of *Cakrasaṃvara/Vajravārāhī*, and their presence emphasizes the fact that the teachings of the *Mahāsiddhas* are the source of the iconography and practices of *Cakrasaṃvara/Vajravārāhī*. Therefore, the portrayals of the *Mahāsiddhas* in the charnal fields is the direct equivalent of the Tibetan preceptor lineage portrayed in many paintings as a line of teachers across the top of the painting.

Across the top of the painting is a series of eleven deities (11-21) that I have not been able to identify fully. They are probably deities of the *Cakrasaṃvara/Vajravārāhī* cycle and may be the *Ḍākas* and *Ḍākinīs* that populate the retinues of various versions of the *maṇḍala*. The environment of the charnal fields is described as filled with these types of beings, such as *Ḍākas*, *Ḍākinīs*, yogis, and yoginis, who are the ideal practitioners and accomplished adepts of the *anuttarayoga tantras*. Their presence here helps to create the proper environment for

tantric practices. Across the bottom is another series of *Ḍākinīs* (22-28), whose presence draws attention to the importance of *Ḍākinīs* in the whole *Cakrasaṃvara* system. *Ḍākinīs* serve as supernatural helpers and human companions in the *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra*, and the text maintains that the assistance of *Ḍākinīs* is necessary for any practitioner who hopes to attain enlightenment.<sup>10</sup>

The Nepali practice of the *Cakrasaṃvara*/Vajravārāhi tradition involves performing tantric rituals, particularly *gaṇacakras* (tantric feasts), in the context of passage-rite ceremonies. This context seems to be implied in this painting, judging from the manner of portraying the patrons in the lower register of the painting. A patron (left side of j) and an officiating priest (center of j) wearing a Vajrasattva *Merumukūṭa* (Mount Meru headdress/crown) are performing the *homa* ceremony<sup>11</sup> (intended as a ritual of purification) before the image of a crowned (Skt. *mukūṭadhārin*) Buddha.<sup>12</sup> On the other side of the painting is a group of six family members of the patron (m), and in front of them is another priest (l). Since there is no inscription, one cannot identify which of the ritual occasions of Nepali Buddhist life was being depicted.

While there apparently are no surviving Pāla paintings showing Heruka, the Lha khang So ma at Alchi in Ladakh contains a series of mural paintings of the Herukas that are direct lineal descendents of the Pāla tradition. As may be seen from the Lha khang So ma image of a two-armed form of *Cakrasaṃvara* with Vajravārāhi (fig. 30), the basic convention for the image (iconomorph) was well established and in many ways is very close to the Nepali version. Where comparable, the same attributes are in the same hands, the positions of the figures are almost identical, and the arrangement of deities of the *maṇḍala* is similar although different in scale.

What is seen then in the Nepali version is a continuation of the Pāla iconography and a substantial series of details that relates directly to the Pāla style. However, the stylistic treatment is different from what would be expected in Pāla India or found in Tibet. The most notable and immediately salient stylistic difference is the predominance of the red coloration in the background and flame (Skt. *mahājñānāgni*) aura, creating the impression that the primary color of the painting is red. The posture of Vajravārāhi, with her left leg following the right leg of *Cakrasaṃvara*, is identical to the "joined together" (Skt. *yuganaddha*) position usually found in Indian representations of *yab yum* couples and differs from the predominant Tibetan version, in which the female Buddha's legs are both wrapped around the waist of the male Buddha. While this variation may reflect a point of textual interpretation according to the masters of the lineage (the actual position is not specified in any of the texts that I have read thus far) and both variants are found in both Nepal and Tibet, the position with one leg down



Figure 30. *Cakrasaṃvara* with Vajravārāhi. Wall painting in the Lha khang So ma. Alchi, Ladakh, India.

predominates in Nepal. The arrangement of the charnal fields and the figures in them is typically Nepali, especially in the inclusion of portraits of lineage Mahāsiddhas rather than the *Dikpālas* (protectors of the directions) prescribed by the texts.

PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 38, 40, fig. 14.

1. The "reversed," or counterclockwise, order is presented here as it occurs in the *tantra*. The counterclockwise directional sequence is characteristic of "mother *tantras*."
2. This represents the water that is to be sprinkled on the head of the initiate during the initiation ceremonies, a ritual action that symbolizes the transcendental insights that are being transmitted by the initiation.
3. Shinichi Tsuda, *The Saṃvarodaya-Tantra, Selected Chapters* (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1974), 283.
4. Even though the attributes held by the unidentified figure and his female consort are not clearly enough delineated in the painting to make an accurate identification, it is possible to make a reasoned guess as to whom it may be. Given the technical categories of the other two Herukas, it may be assumed that the deity is one of the Herukas of the "father" class of *anuttarayoga tantra* and, therefore, probably Guhyasamāja. The *tantras* of the *anuttarayoga tantra* class (to which the *Cakrasaṃvara* belongs) are divided into three categories: 1) "father (*pa*, or *yogi*) *tantras*" (i.e., those *tantras* that emphasize the production stage of meditation and in which the chief deity is male and the majority of the deities are male), 2) "mother (*ma*,



or *yogini* tantras" (i.e., those *tantras* that emphasize the completion stage of meditation and in which either the chief deity and/or most of the deities are female), and, according to some classification systems, 3) "nondual tantras" (in which the male and female aspects are equally present). Since Kālacakra is usually classified as a nondual *tantra* and Cakrasaṃvara is the archetypical "mother *tantra*," the remaining figure is most likely of the "father *tantra*" class. This class includes Guhyasamāja, Māyājāla, and the central deity of the *Vajrahṛdayālamkāra*, but because the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* is considered to be the archetype of the "father tantras," it is probable that the deity is Guhyasamāja.

5. There has been confusion regarding which deities have flame and which have radiance (Skt. *prabhā*). This confusion is probably attributable to the fact that specific textual descriptions that are found in the *tantras* of the Heruka class of deities have been taken by art historians and collectors to apply to other deities as well. However, in general, most pacific forms have radiance and most angry (Skt. *krodha*) forms have flames of knowledge.
6. Muslims and Christians in South Asia would be exceptions.
7. Tsuda, *Saṃvarodaya-Tantra*, 292.
8. The list of trees varies slightly in different texts, particularly among Tibetan texts that seek to retain phonetic approximations of the Sanskrit names. The basic list seems to be *śirīṣa* (*Acacia sirissa*), *aśvattha* (*pippala*, *Ficus religiosa*), *kaṅkellī* (the *aśoka* tree, *Jonesia asoka*), *cūta* (mango, or *amb*), *vaṭa* (banyan, or Indian fig tree, *Ficus Indica*), *karañjaka* (a medicinal plant, *Pongamia glabra*), *parkaṭi* (betel nut, *Ficus infectoria*), and *pārthiva* (*Tabernaemontana coronaria*).
9. See discussion of trees in cat. no. 113.
10. Information about the contents of *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* root text provided by Miranda Shaw.
11. The *homa* ritual, or fire offering, is described in detail in the twenty-third chapter of the *Saṃvarodaya-tantra*, translated by Shinichi Tsuda on 306-313. The *homa* ritual is very popular in Nepal, and virtually every *bahā* and *bahī* (the two kinds of Buddhist *viḥāras* in Nepal) has a permanently installed firepit on the central axis of the main courtyard.
12. Another painting of the *maṇḍala* of Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhi in the Newark Museum contains a similar scene. See Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, vol. 2, *Painting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), pl. 101. This is a very important dated painting (1534) and the inscription would, if legible, probably reveal the name of the ritual involved.

93

# FRAGMENT OF A SKETCHBOOK IN THE ṬHYĀSAPHU FORMAT WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF NUMEROUS DEITIES

By a Nepali artist in Tibet

Ca. sixteenth century, Three Kingdom Malla period

Ink and wash on heavily grounded cotton cloth

H: 9 1/8" W: 15 1/4"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Delia E. Holden Fund  
 (85.191)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Iconographic and stylistic sketchbooks such as this one, mostly the product of Nepali artists working in Tibet, survive in some profusion. They are in what is known in Newari as the *ṭhyāsaphu* format, an accordion-folded manuscript almost always having drawings on both sides. Typically the sketchbooks are between eight and twelve inches wide and unfold to anywhere from a few feet to more than sixty feet long. This and most pieces that have come to Western collections are but fragments of a larger whole. Although there are exceptions, the vast majority of these sketchbooks are clearly not trial books wherein an artist attempts repeatedly to master a subject. On the contrary, there are rarely repetitions or corrections in them. The more experimental attempts of an artist during

training were done on the traditional slate boards of Tibetan usage or some other ephemeral medium. The sketchbooks appear to have been made as records of what the artist learned in Tibet and as a record of iconography for future reference. By the time most of these sketchbooks were produced, Nepal was no longer seen as a source of Buddhological information by the Tibetans. Rather, the Nepalis sought out the Tibetan iconographies and transmission lineages as the "authoritative tradition." Thus, these sketchbooks document the reversed direction of influence, flowing from Tibet to Nepal from about the end of the thirteenth century onward.

Iconographically, the side I arbitrarily have designated as the obverse contains whole images of Cakrasaṃvara to the left, Hevajra in the center, and Vajrabhairava to the right. To the far left appears the proper left portion of what may have been a depiction of Guhyasamāja Mañjughoṣa, but it is impossible to be certain because the figure is incomplete. These figures are all Buddhas of the Heruka class and were probably part of an iconographic program that the artist of this sketchbook prepared for some Tibetan institution.

On the reverse is the Lokapāla Vaiśravaṇa with two attendants covering the two left sections, Yama embracing Yamarī and Uṣṇīṣavijayā at the top and bottom respectively of the next section, an unidentified goddess emerging from a skull cup (Skt. *kapāla*) at the top of the right section, and either the Buddha Vairocana or Śākyamuni Buddha displaying *dharmacakra mudrā* below. One of the rarely encountered "trials" of an apparently different crown convention appears to the side of the head of Yama. Its presence suggests that the artist was being shown a different convention than the basically Nepali one he used in the Yama drawing.

Stylistically this fragment of the sketchbook relates most closely to the Tibetan Bal bris school, and several of the figures—the Yama, Yamarī, Vajrabhairava, and Vaiśravaṇa—are clearly far more Tibetan than Nepali. Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra are more slender of limb and have an attenuation that marks them as predominantly Nepali. With documents such as this, it is possible to trace in detail the interaction of continued Nepali influence in Tibet with Tibetan influence on Nepal carried home by the Nepali artists in their memories and sketchbooks.

CANḌAMAHĀROṢAṆA AND DVEṢAVAJRĪ (ALSO KNOWN AS VAJRAYOGINĪ)

Nepal, late Pāla-derived school

Ca. sixteenth or seventeenth century,<sup>1</sup> Three Kingdom Malla period

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 32 1/2" W: 23"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Illustrated in color

The practices of Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa and Dveṣavajrī are widely popular in Nepali Buddhism. Although their *tantra* was partially translated into English over a decade ago<sup>2</sup> and paintings of them have been published several times, their iconography has yet to be analyzed. The composition is actually a *maṇḍala* of deities, although in a rectangular format rather than the better-known circular form. In the center are the principal deities of the cycle, Kṛṣṇa Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa and Dveṣavajrī (fig. 31, 1 & 2).

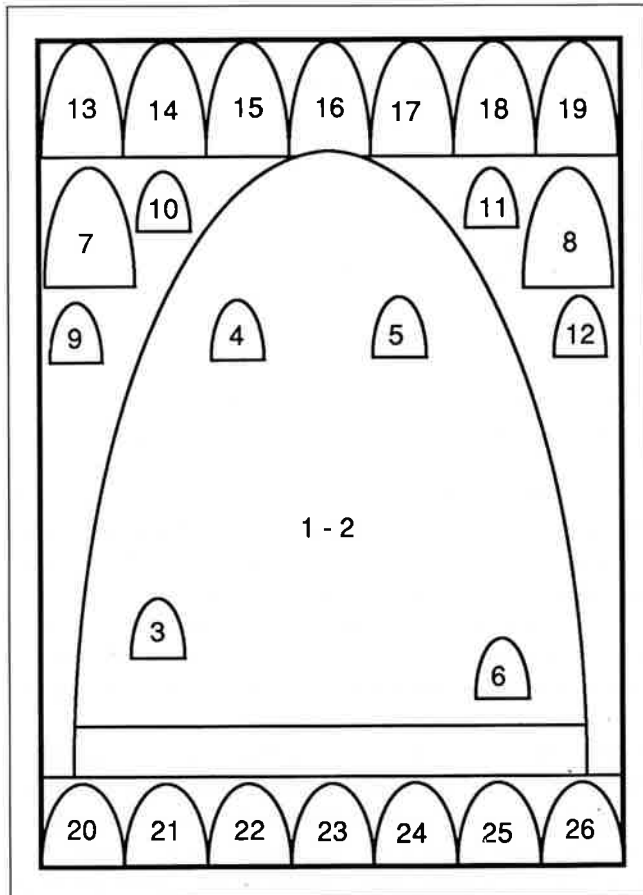


Figure 31. Diagram of cat. no. 94.

The female Buddha, Dveṣavajrī, actually goes by several names in the *tantra*, including Vajradhātviśvarī,

Vajrayoginī, and Prajñāpāramitā. Surrounding the central couple are the four deities of the inner petals of the lotus: Śveta Acala to the east (3), Pīṭa Acala to the south (4), Rakta Acala to the west (5), and Śyāma Acala to the north (6). The female counterparts (Skt. *prajñā*) of the four inner deities are not shown. According to the root *tantra*, these would be white Mohavajrī in the southeast, yellow Piśunavajrī in the southwest, red Rāgavajrī in the northeast, and green Īrṣyāvajrī in the northeast.<sup>3</sup> When the females are not depicted they are understood implicitly to be present with their male consorts.

In the upper left and right corners of the central portion of the composition are Kālacakra (7) accompanied by Avalokiteśvara (9) and Vajrasattva (10) and Hevajra (8) accompanied by Vajradhara (11) and Maitreya [?] (12). These are not standard groupings. Vajradhara is the Ādi Buddha and may be present as the progenitor of the whole, while Vajrasattva is the intermediary who proclaims the teachings of the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*. Hevajra and Kālacakra are Heruka class deities of a type known as *iṣṭadevatā* (literally, "chosen deity"; Tib. *yi dam*). They figure mainly in the most advanced of the Tantric Buddhist meditations. Normally they would have been included in this context as important objects of study and meditation for the individual(s) for whom the painting was commissioned. The two Bodhisattvas (Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya [?]) probably form a pair across the center, in which case they serve as attendants to the Buddhas Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa and Dveṣavajrī. Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa and Dveṣavajrī are progeny of Akṣobhya Buddha and are specifically stated to have been born from the womb of Mamakī (Akṣobhya's female counterpart).

Across the top and bottom of the painting are registers of Ḍākinīs (13-26). These are not specifically mentioned in the *tantra*, and without further information on the actual practice of the rituals of the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra* as performed in Nepal it is impossible to ascertain their identities.

The art historical and stylistic importance of this painting is that it is a late continuation of the same basic style as seen in the Nepali Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 92). In this style, iconographically determined features predominate in the entire composition. The discretionary elements are limited to characteristics of the halo, the lotus petals under the central deities, details of the sashes, and other secondary aspects of the painting. For example, such details as the "swallow-tail" folds of the billowing sashes or the details of the vine scroll motif in the green halo behind the head of the central figures are indicative of the date and may be traced in a continuous line of development from the earliest surviving Nepali painting.

The painting demonstrates the vitality of the tradition and yet the truly astonishing consistency of iconographic convention that persisted throughout Nepal from the

earliest days of Pāla influence in the twelfth century well into the eighteenth century. This artistic tradition has been preserved, albeit on a smaller scale, by the Newari Buddhist community in Nepal to the present day.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Nepal: Where the Gods are Young* (New York and Tokyo: Asia Society in association with John Weatherhill, 1974), 52, 79, no. 34; Detlef-Ingo Lauf, *Verborgene Botschaft Tibetischer Thangkas (Secret Revelation of Tibetan Thangkas): Picture Meditation and Interpretation of Lamaist Cult Paintings* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Aurum Verlag GmbH and Co. KG, 1976), 40-41; Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, vol. 2, *Painting* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1978), 83, pl. 110.

1. A very fragmentary inscription across the bottom may have contained a date. However, the losses and subsequent cosmetic coloring by a well-intentioned restorer probably have precluded the use of infrared photography to bring out the inscription.
2. Christopher S. George, *The Candamahārōṣaṇa Tantra: A Critical Edition and English Translation, Chapters 1-8*, American Oriental Series 56 (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1974), 44-85.
3. Literally, "Adamantine Delusion," "Adamantine Slander," "Adamantine Lust," and "Adamantine Envy."

95

KHADIRAVANĪ TĀRĀ

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

Ca. late ninth or tenth century, first period of rule by the *ṭhakurī* (chieftains)

Grey stone

H: 26 1/2" W: 13" D: 5"

Nancy Wiener

One of the most popular female deities in both Nepali and Tibetan Buddhism, Khadiravanī Tārā is found in many forms and is shown both standing and seated. She is iconographically characterized by a *nīlotpala* (blue lotus) carried in her left hand or, as seen here, gracing a stalk over her left shoulder. She invariably displays *varada* or *vara mudrā* with her right hand and in some cases, such as this one, offers an ovoid object—presumably a medicinal fruit.<sup>1</sup> She was and still is extremely popular as a protectress from all evils that might befall one and all obstacles to enlightenment, and her worship centers on the belief that she can save the devotee from a series of eight perils.<sup>2</sup>

The early Nepali treatment of the female figure is characterized by a narrow waist contrasted with full hips and distinctively heavy, gracefully curving thighs. She is simply adorned and draped with jewelry and personal ornamentation that is relatively understated compared to later examples. She stands in the *tribhaṅga* pose against a plain backslab ornamented only by a beading and

*prabhāvalī* (radiant light) motif around the edge. Except for the full thighs and the slightly greater accentuation to the bent posture, the major elements of the composition are very closely related to the early Pāla convention. However, the discretionary elements and some details of the composition, such as the spiral water designs to either side of her feet, have no Pāla counterpart.

While such slabs as this probably were used in both wooden and brick temple architecture and were probably set in niches just as their Pāla counterparts had been, no temple dating from the period of this sculpture has survived intact in Nepal. Accordingly, images such as this will always remain "out of context."

1. I have not been able to determine what type of a fruit is associated with Khadiravanī. While it may be the fruit of the Khadiravanī tree, in sculptures it looks more like a *bel*, or "wood-apple."
2. See cat. nos. 108 and 113 for details.

96

ŚIVA AND PĀRVATĪ, SEATED AND EMBRACING  
(UMĀ-MAHEŚVARA MŪRTI)

Nepal, Patan, Gahiti

Ca. eleventh century, late first or early second period of rule by the *ṭhakurī* (chieftains)

Stone

H: 29 1/2" W: 22" D: 2 1/2"

Courtesy of Denver Art Museum; The Harold P. and Jane F. Ullman Collection, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Edwin F. Ullman (1980.231)

The predominant religion of the Kathmandu Valley from the earliest known period has been Śaivism. Śaivite works in stone dating from at least as early as the second century A.D. are found throughout the valley, and the tradition flourishes there to the present day. A popular type of Śaivite icon is the Umā-Maheśvara image wherein Śiva sits on Mount Kailāsa with Pārvatī (Umā) at his side.

Stylistically, this image provides an example in which the composition and discretionary elements are purely Nepali while the iconometrics of the central image appear to have been influenced by the Pāla conventions. By examining the way in which the iconometric component has been influenced while the discretionary elements and composition remained steadfastly Nepali, it will be possible more systematically to approach the analysis of Nepali art. The composition is much more reminiscent of early post-Gupta idioms and the Licchavi heritage in Nepal than anything found in the Pāla regions. The animated quality of the figures and the somewhat irregular positioning of the figures on the stele are particularly characteristic of the indigenous Nepali tradition.

The stele is crowded with figures from Śiva's entourage and family. At the top right and left are two Śiva door guardians (Skt. *dvārapāla*); to the left emerging from behind Śiva is the bull Nandi, Śiva's vehicle; and to the left, reaching up to Śiva's knee, is the infant Skanda. The latter is identified by the presence of a small toylike peacock that he holds in his proper right hand. Other major figures across the bottom, from left to right, are Ghaṇṭākarna, Brahmā, Gaṇeśa, and Kumbhāṇḍa. The latter carries the same attributes as the *dvārapāla* but also has a terrific face in his belly. The fifth figure in the lower register is the Ṛṣi Bhr̥ṅgī in his emaciated form.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest depictions of Umā-Maheśvara in Nepal date from the third or fourth century, and the same basic iconographic convention survived in Nepali sculpture up to at least the seventeenth century. While there is considerable variation in composition and in discretionary elements, the icon of Umā-Maheśvara remains remarkably constant, with only two major forms established. In one of the forms Umā sits beside Śiva but does not recline against him, while in the other Umā reclines against him, as seen in this composition. This convention for the image of Umā-Maheśvara parallels a similar type of image found in Bihar beginning in about the seventh century (see cat. no. 2). The background discretionary elements have been studied at length by Krishna Deva<sup>2</sup> and appear to be totally internal Nepali conventions.<sup>3</sup> Compositionally, the arrangement of the figures in Nepali stelae is subject to considerable variation, additions and deletions depending on the patron and *purohita* (priest) underwriting the making of the sculpture. Śiva and Umā may occur alone or be accompanied by more than twenty figures in the composition. Bihari images do not exhibit this variation, but instead repeat the basic details, varying them only by subjecting them to the stylistic evolution that occurred in the Bihar region.

While this image of Śiva and Pārvatī clearly demonstrates the presence of Pāla influence in the iconometric positioning and proportions of Śiva and Umā, the rest of the stele displays a virtually pure Nepali style. It is this type of mixing of components rather than broad sweeping changes that must be taken into account if the true impact of Pāla art on the art of Nepal is to be understood.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, vol. 1, *Sculpture* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1974), 87-97 and pl. 134; Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Shiva* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981), 60-62; Krishna Deva, *Images of Nepal* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1984), 35, pl. 50.

1. Following Krishna Deva, *Images of Nepal* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1984), 35. For a discussion of Ṛṣi Bhr̥ṅgī, see cat. no. 43.

2. Krishna Deva, *Images of Nepal*, 30-38.

3. I have based my evaluation on our photographic archive of more than four thousand Nepali images, all *in situ*. For published comparative images, see Lain S. Bangdel, *The Early Sculptures of Nepal* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982), pls. 105-116; Krishna Deva, *Images of Nepal*, pls. 47-52; Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, vol. 1, *Sculpture* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1974), pls. 9, 27, 38, 51, 128-136; and Mary Shephard Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), vol. 2, pls. 350-355. It may be noted that there is little technical stylistic analysis by the authors and even less agreement regarding dating.

97

#### VIṢṆU ON GARUḌA

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley, possibly Bhaktapur  
Ca. sixteenth or seventeenth century, Three Kingdom  
Malla period

Stone

H: 17 3/4" W: 13 1/2" D: 4 1/2"

The Art Institute of Chicago, Bertha Evans Brown  
Purchase Fund (1982.1450)

Viṣṇu is the supreme godhead of the Vaiṣṇava tradition, one of the three major branches of the South Asian religious complex known collectively as Hinduism, or Brahmanism. There are two major shrines to Viṣṇu in the Kathmandu Valley, one at Changu Narayan and the other at Buddhanilakantha. However, Viṣṇu is a very popular deity, and his images and shrines abound in the valley.

The form of this image of Viṣṇu, his position in relation to Garuḍa, and such details as his attributes have remained constant since the seventh or eighth century. Yet the discretionary details have evolved greatly from the pre-Pāla or Pāla prototypes. They represent the fully developed Nepali ornamental synthesis with its elaboration, refined detailing, and specific formulations such as the *prabhāmaṇḍala* (aura), jewelry conventions, and billowing enfoliations. This piece exemplifies the late stone-carving convention and demonstrates the stability of the eighth-century iconomorphic conventions in comparison to the development that took place in the discretionary elements.



## HARI-HARA

Nepal

Ca. 1700, Three Kingdom Malla period

Stone

H: 30" W: 18" D: 6"

The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Gift of the Women's Committee of the Museum of Art, 1969

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

The god depicted is Hari-Hara, a combination of Śiva and Viṣṇu. While at first glance the frontal, unflexed posture and four-armed configuration give the impression that the god is Viṣṇu alone, the snake ornaments worn by the god and the trident and string of recitation beads he holds in his right hands are attributes of Śiva. In depictions of composite deities such as Hari-Hara, it is common to divide the figure up the middle, with each half wearing different clothing and jewelry. However, here only the two earrings are different, providing a more unified appearance to the image. The proper left hands hold two of Viṣṇu's attributes, the wheel (*cakra*) and conch (*śaṅkha*), confirming the identification of the proper left half of the god as Viṣṇu.

Closely related to an image of the same iconography dated A. D. 1697,<sup>1</sup> this image may securely be dated to virtually the same period. In spite of the fact that this image was created several hundred years after the Pāla period had ended, it is striking in the resemblance of its configuration to Pāla prototypes. The god not only is surrounded by a stelelike aura, but also stands frontally and unflexed in the manner prevalent during the late Pāla period. However, the discretionary details have completely diverged from their Pāla counterparts. The face, for example, shows the flatter, broad form of the late Nepali type.

1. Krishna Deva, *Images of Nepal* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1984), pl. 57.

ŚIVA AND PĀRVATĪ, SEATED AND EMBRACING  
(UMĀ-MAHEŚVARA MŪRTI)

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

Ca. tenth century, first period of rule by the *ṭhakurī* (chieftains)

Metal, copper alloy (untested)

H: 6 1/8" W: 6 1/4" D: 3 1/4"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.48)

Śiva sits at ease with and amorously embraces his *śakti* (literally, "power" or "energy"), Umā, or Pārvatī. The form has occurred in Nepali sculpture since the third or fourth century.<sup>1</sup> The image type underwent its own internal development in Nepal, but nonetheless retained a close typological relationship to the Bihari schools. This relationship raises the intriguing possibility that there was an ongoing interchange of artistic influence between the two regions. However, this potentially major crosscultural phenomenon is not attested by the historical chronicles.

Stylistically the image is a parallel offshoot of the general post-Gupta, eastern Indic tradition. This small copper alloy image exemplifies the comparative simplicity of early Nepali metal images. In contrast to the Nepali stone version of Umā-Maheśvara (cat. no. 96), in which the elaborateness of the composition and all of the discretionary elements are overwhelmingly Nepali, this metal image of Umā-Maheśvara primarily reflects the Pāla heritage. However, the treatment of the halo, the style of the cushion under the couple, and the position of Umā identify it unquestionably as Nepali.

In Nepali sculpture, there are many minor permutations of the naturalistically relaxed posture of Umā as she sits or semi-reclines next to or against Śiva (compare, for example, to cat. no. 96)

## PUBLISHED:

The Asia Society, compiler, *Masterpieces of Asian Art in American Collections*, vol. 2 (New York, The Asia Society, 1970), 42-43, no. 10; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 25; Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Shiva* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981), 128, no. 104.

1. Mary Shephard Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), vol. 2, pl. 350.

## AVALOKITEŚVARA

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

Ca. ninth century, late Licchavi or first period of rule by the *ṭhakurī* (chieftains)

Copper with fire gilding (untested)

H: 24 3/4" W: 6 7/8" D: 4 1/4"

Cincinnati Art Museum, The Mr. and Mrs. William Taft Semple Collection (1962.445)

A relatively early image of Avalokiteśvara, this figure illustrates one of the two main iconographic traditions for Avalokiteśvara in Nepal, namely, with the right hand displaying *varada* or *vara mudrā*, the symbolic gesture of bestowal of blessings.<sup>1</sup> A second major type (cat. no. 101) is iconologically virtually identical except that the right hand displays *vitarka mudrā*, the symbolic gesture of discourse in the Dharma. The fact that there are a fairly substantial number of both types of images dating from about the late eighth century on suggests that both types may be copies or surrogates of two of the more popular forms of Avalokiteśvara worshipped in Nepal.<sup>2</sup>

The image reflects an ongoing tradition of Nepali images that closely follow north Indian and especially Pāla models.<sup>3</sup> However, the style of the image is a fully internalized Nepali style, although it is clearly dependent on Indic prototypes. Stylistically, it compares very closely to an eighth-century metal image of Mañjuśrī Kumāra from Nālandā.<sup>4</sup> The stance, anatomical detailing, lower garment (Skt. *dhotī*), and some details of the jewelry are virtually identical to the Nālandā piece. However, as I have shown elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> Kashmiri influences are present in the details of the jewelry and the format of the crown convention.

Distinctive Nepali features in the composition include the sash at the side of the figure (to the proper left on this example, but it may appear to either side), the looped sacred thread draping across the sash, and the details of the girdle and sash hanging from the waist down between the legs. These are characteristically Nepali treatments of the lower garments and may be found on the earliest surviving Nepali images. While these elements are found in the seventh-century stucco images of Nālandā (fig. 32), they have been interpreted in accordance with the Nepali idiom and provided with an entirely different structural character and rhythm, rendering them distinct from their Indian prototypes.

## PUBLISHED:

*Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 17 (1963), 58; Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal* (New York: Asia Society, 1964), 68, 132, no. 19; *Cincinnati Art Museum Bulletin* 7, nos. 3-4 (Feb. 1965), illus.; *Sculpture Collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum* (1970), 104; Ulrich von

Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 328-329, pl. 86E; *Masterpieces from the Cincinnati Art Museum* (1984), 46.



Figure 32. Bodhisattva. Temple 3 at Nālandā, Bihar, India. Ca. seventh century. Stucco.

1. There are many more forms of Avalokiteśvara in Nepal, however. At least 108 are known. See Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography: Mainly Based on the Sādhnamālā and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Rituals*, reprint with corrections (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), 394-431. However, to date no detailed study or iconographic survey has attempted to provide a complete survey of Avalokiteśvara types in Nepali Buddhist iconography.
2. Regrettably, it is impossible even to suggest which two. There are four major temples to Avalokiteśvara in the Kathmandu Valley: the Rato Matsyendranātha at Jana Baha in Patan, the Seto Matsyendranātha in Kathmandu, the Adinatha Matsyendranātha (known as Śrīsthikantha Lokeśvara) at Chobar, and the Nala Matsyendranātha at Nala. According to one tradition, these were Avalokiteśvara shrines from a very early date; however, according to another tradition, they were converted Nāthapanthi temples. While the "conversion" tradition seems to lack credibility, it is clear in either case that there was an early emphasis on the cult of Avalokiteśvara in Nepal. In the two of these four temples whose shrine images I have been able to see, the present shrine images appear to be far more recent than the metal figures in the exhibition. Thus, there is no obvious or direct correlation to any of the shrines in their present state. However, by the eighth and ninth centuries, the concept of sacred images and the fabrication of surrogates of them was already well established.
3. John C. Huntington, "Three Essays on Himalayan Metal Images," *Apollo*, n.s. 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 416-425; see espec. 419-422. The image under discussion stylistically falls almost exactly between the two Asia Society images discussed in the *Apollo* article.
4. John C. Huntington, "Three Essays," fig. 9.
5. John C. Huntington, "Three Essays," 416-425; see espec. 419-422.

## AVALOKITEŚVARA

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

Ca. tenth or early eleventh century, first period of rule by the *thakurī* (chieftains)

Copper with fire gilding (untested) and inset semiprecious stones

H: 26 3/4" W: 10" D: 5 1/4"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D.

Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.47)

Shown in Dayton and Baltimore

Iconographically similar to the preceeding example, this figure displays *vitarka mudrā*, the symbolic gesture of discourse in the Dharma, and while the image is probably a copy of one of the famous images of Avalokiteśvara worshipped in the Kathmandu Valley at the time of its manufacture, the *vitarka mudrā* suggests that the image may also have been an attendant to Amitābha Buddha.

In comparison to the ninth-century image of Avalokiteśvara (cat. no. 100), this image has fuller and more fleshy anatomy, more clearly articulated and three-dimensionally rendered drapery, bolder and larger portrayals of the jewelry, and a slightly more animated stance. A distinctive Pāla characteristic is apparent in the distinctive *gomukha* ("cow's face" visual metaphor) treatment of the upper torso. This convention was standard during much of the Pāla period, and its presence here is direct evidence of ongoing influence in metal image making.

The jewelry was apparently originally inset with gems. The bezels that would have held the stones contain pitch and show signs of having been worked (bent in to hold the polished stone in place). That would make this one of the earliest known Nepali pieces to have such a lavish inlay. In comparison to the previous image, the major ornaments in the jewelry are all open in the center, whereas the previous piece has round "gems" of copper cast in place, with the exception of the single stone in the center of the headdress.

A distinctive Nepali characteristic is the clearly defined flower motifs chased into the surface of the *dhotī* (lower garment). By the time of this image, the design of Nepali sculpture had undergone a Nepali synthesis and, regardless of whether the elements were originally Pāla, Kashmiri, or indigenously Nepali, the combination had become a syncretic whole.

## PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, "Rockefeller Bronzes: The Indian Tradition," *ARTnews* 69, no. 5 (Sept. 1970), 48-49, 76-77; Mahonri Sharp Young, "Treasures of the Orient: A Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s., 92, no. 105 (Nov. 1970), 329-339; Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from*

*the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd* (New York: The Asia Society, 1970), 18-19, 31, no. 7; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 24; Robert D. Mowry, "Masterworks in Asian Art," *The Lamp* 63, no. 3 (Fall 1981), 20-25; The Asia Society, compiler, *Guide to the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of Asian Art* (New York: The Asia Society, [1982]), n.p.; Diane Cats and Brooke Travelstead, "Signs and Symbols in Indian Buddhist Art," *Focus on Asian Studies*, n.s., 2, no. 1 (Fall 1982), 30-39; John C. Huntington, "Three Essays on Himalayan Metal Images," *Apollo*, n.s. 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 419, fig. 7 on p. 420.

## MAÑJUŚRĪ KUMĀRA

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

Ca. ninth or tenth century, Licchavi period or first period of rule by the *thakurī* (chieftains)

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 6 9/16" W: 6 1/2" D: 3 3/4"

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. Richard Benedek, 1978 (1978.394.1)

Mañjuśrī Kumāra, the youthful Bodhisattva of transcendental wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*), is known in several forms. As the personification of the Prajñāpāramitā wisdom, the "fruit" (Skt. *phala*) proffered in his right hand is essentially the "fruit" of enlightenment. His name, Mañjuśrī, may be read several ways; *mañju* is "beautiful," "sweet," or "charming," while *śrī* literally means "glory" (in the sense of a radiant glory) but also is a double entendre (Skt. *sleśa*)<sup>1</sup> referring to the goddess, or Śrī, in both the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. In Buddhism the goddess is naturally Prajñāpāramitā, who is herself a personification of the enlightening wisdom contained in the Prajñāpāramitā texts. Thus, his name also can be translated as "Beautiful [radiant] Glory" and as "Beautiful Goddess," both being references to the Prajñāpāramitā texts.

Shown seated on the lion throne (Skt. *simhāsana*) of a Buddha and having a slightly corpulent child's form, Mañjuśrī Kumāra is depicted holding a *nīlotpala*, or blue lotus, in his left hand and offering the fruit to the devotee with his right hand. Apparently intended to be represented as a child of about seven or eight, his youthful countenance is further emphasized by the characteristic tiger claw talismans that hang from his necklace. Such talismans are still worn by children in village India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Nepal Terai as protection against disease and evil. These became an attribute of Mañjuśrī and are

found even on "adult" representations of Mañjuśrī (see cat. no. 25), but are here seen apparently as originally intended, to express the childlike nature of the Bodhisattva.

Because of the iconologically determined youthful proportions of the body and comparatively full face, the form of the anatomy does not easily yield to the usual stylistic analysis. However, discretionary elements such as the treatment of incised linear designs of the *dhōṭī*, the detailing of the jewelry, and the relative simplicity of the headdress all mark this as a ninth- or tenth-century piece. These features may be compared with those on a roughly contemporaneous representation of Avalokiteśvara (cat. no. 100), which are virtually identical in conception and execution.

PUBLISHED:

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art], *Notable Acquisitions, 1975-1979* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 90; "Art of Asia Acquired by North American Museums, 1979," *Archives of Asian Art* 33 (1980), 127, fig. 41; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 326-327, pl. 85D.

1. *Sleṣa*, "double meaning," is one of the twelve limbs of composition in Sanskrit grammar. Often, a textual passage will have two or more meanings, each of which was consciously intended by the author so that the passage would have two or more levels of interpretation, creating a richness of nuance and expression. Double and multiple meanings are so common in Buddhist literature that they are the norm rather than the exception and are to be expected at every turn.

103

# AMOGHAPĀŚA LOKEŚVARA

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

Ca. sixteenth or seventeenth century, Three Kingdom Malla period

Copper alloy with fire gilding (untested), traces of blue pigment in hair

H: 11" W: 5 1/2" D: 4 1/4"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.50)

Archetype of the protective deity par excellence, the Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara form of Avalokiteśvara is, throughout the Buddhist world and especially in Nepal, one of the most popular of all Buddhist deities among the laity. The Nepali *Aṣṭami vrata* (Eightfold rite) of Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara includes the invocation:

To Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara, the mirror  
of the worlds, whose mind is bent  
on great mercy, the one who destroys  
all diseases, poverty, suffering

and unbearable troubles, I offer  
this sacrifice. . . . Take, eat,  
grant peace, prosperity and  
protection. Om A[h] Hūm Phat Svaha.<sup>1</sup>

The various *sūtras* to Amoghapāśa confirm that this deity is primarily a protective deity concerned ostensibly with mundane, day-to-day well-being. While a deeper significance may be proffered in oral esoteric teachings or *sādhana*s circulated only among initiates, the usual philosophical and soteriological connotations ascribed to Avalokiteśvara are lacking or deemphasized in the descriptions of his Amoghapāśa form.

Stylistically this piece may only be understood fully in terms of developments that occurred in Tibet and China from about the eleventh century through the fourteenth century. During these centuries, artists from Nepal created for Tibetan and Mongol/Chinese patrons a distinct subschool known in Tibet as Bal sku (pronounced balgu), literally, the "Nepal sculpture [style]." It was predicated on the Pāla school, known in Tibet as the Shar mthun sku (pronounced sharthūngu), literally, "sculpture [style] agreeing with the eastern [Indian style]." As the Bal sku school developed, both compositional and discretionary elements evolved and were garnered from other traditions such as the Kashmiri, Chinese, and Inner Asian. By the thirteenth century and through the fourteenth century, Bal sku had become a distinctive sculptural school with clearly definable characteristics and numerous subschools. Throughout this time Nepali artists travelled to Tibet and even to China as master artisans; however, what they produced was not their own designs and style but rather the Bal sku that was being done in Tibet and China. It is natural that some of the influences encountered abroad were brought back and integrated into Nepali styles.

The "form" of the figure of Amoghapāśa is clearly related to a Sino-Tibetan silver image of Śaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara (cat. no. 156) and demonstrates a remarkable stylistic continuity across the entire Sino-Tibetan cultural region. Yet the lotus base, with its very narrow lotus petals, elongated stalk, and convoluted tendrils, is clearly Nepali in design and manufacture. Ultimately, the net origins of the figural form must be seen as Pāla-derived and probably related to one of the subschools of Magadhan sculpture. Yet the image also must be seen as an outstanding example of the ongoing Pāla international style as reinterpreted in the Tibetan Bal sku idiom and, further, as a demonstration of the extremely complex interactions of the artists from differing regions of Asia in influencing and perpetuating the style.

PUBLISHED:

The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 26; Marylin M. Rhie and Robert



A. F. Thurman, *From the Land of Snows: Buddhist Art of Tibet*, Catalogue of an exhibition at the Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Oct. 3-Nov. 15, 1984 [Amherst, Mass.: Amherst College, 1984], no. 74.

1. See John K. Locke, *Karunamaya: The Cult of Avalokiteśvara—Matsyendranath in the Valley of Nepal* (Kathmandu: Sahayogi Prakashan for the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, 1980), 123. *Vratas* are rites or rituals of great antiquity. For a brief overview on modern Newari *vratas* (which undoubtedly closely relate to those of the period of the piece in question), see Todd T. Lewis, "Mahāyāna *Vratas* in Newar Buddhism," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 12, no. 1 (1989): 109-138.

104

## TĀRĀ AND BHRĪKUṬĪ

(A PAIR OF ATTENDANT FIGURES TO A LOST IMAGE OF  
AVALOKITEŚVARA)

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

Ca. 1435, early Malla period

Wood with polychrome

Tārā H: 42 1/2" W: 16" D: 9 1/2"

Bhrīkuṭī H: 46" W: 24" D: 9"

Anonymous private collection

Illustrated in color

In Nepal, Tārā and Bhrīkuṭī are the female companions of several forms of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, most frequently but not invariably Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara.<sup>1</sup> These two figures would have stood flanking a larger wooden sculpture of the central deity (Skt. *pradhānā* or *jyeṣṭhā*<sup>2</sup>) and sometimes are envisioned as the female hypostases of his compassion (Tārā) and wisdom (Bhrīkuṭī). There may well have been other subsidiary figures, such as Hayagrīva<sup>3</sup> or minor acolytes of the three main deities, making the group a pentad or even a septad. However, all that can be determined is that the two females did flank some form of Avalokiteśvara. There is no known iconic group consisting of just these two deities.

Although neither figure retains any of her usual attributes, it is almost certain that such attributes would have been present in the original context. These would have been separate, three-dimensional objects placed in the hands. Usually, although not invariably, Tārā holds a lotus<sup>4</sup> in her left hand, while her right hand makes the symbolic gesture of reassurance, *abhaya mudrā*. Bhrīkuṭī's back left hand probably held a *parajitā* flower (coral tree) and the principal (front left) hand held a string of recitation beads (Skt. *mālā*). The two right hands make *abhaya mudrā* and a gesture of greeting to the principal figure (*pradhānā*) of the group (or may hold a *Prajñāpāramitā* text).

These two figures are in remarkably good condition for wooden sculptures of such antiquity, particularly in

view of the intensely active worship performed at Nepali shrines of Avalokiteśvara. A close examination reveals that the feet are badly discolored and have been exposed to dust, dirt, and other ravages of time, while the rest of the figures are in virtually pristine condition. Apparently, the figures were given an offering of garments—a common devotional practice in Nepali Buddhism—at an early date. Thus, their bodies were covered and protected from damage and deterioration. This simple act of piety on the part of a devotee has thus preserved the images to a degree unparalleled in other wooden images of this date.

Due to the good condition of the painted lower garments, it is possible to be quite specific about the date when the figures were made. A careful examination of the motifs on the legs reveals alternating bands of red and white. This pattern is shared with most Nepali wooden sculptures of female figures, but here the detail fortuitously has survived. In the red bands, there is a vinescroll motif with a specific set of conventions that are closely comparable and in some cases identical to those found in a Nepali sketchbook dated 1435 (Newar Samvat 555) (fig. 33).<sup>5</sup>

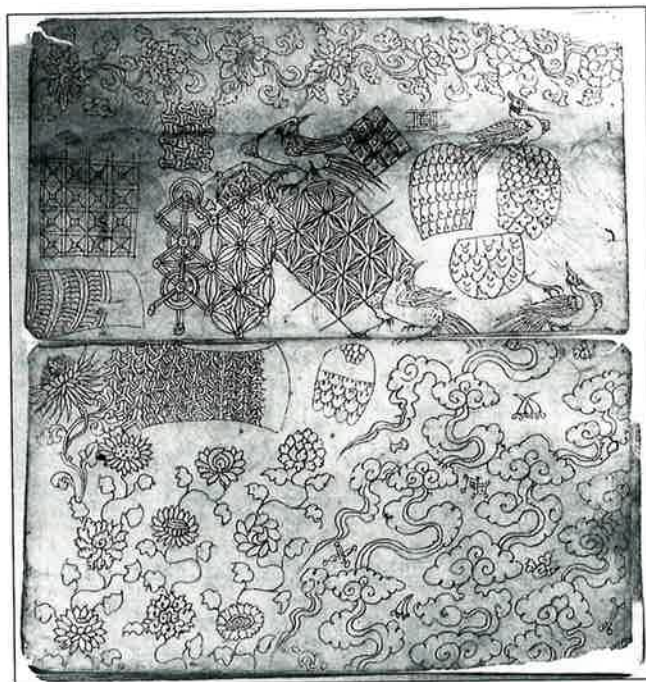


Figure 33. Designs in Nepali sketchbook of A.D. 1435. Collection of S. K. Neotia, Calcutta.

Several of the details of the sketchbook vinescroll (above the head of the bird), such as the flowers and some of the leaf patterns, are virtually identical to the vinescroll motif on the Tārā and Bhrīkuṭī figures. In addition, a small, horizontal, ladderlike motif in the sketchbook is identical to the pattern of the band between the larger red and white bands of the figures' garments. In the context of the rapidly evolving fifteenth-century Nepali style, the

similarity of the two motifs is too close for there to have been more than a negligible time lapse between the production of the sketchbook and the manufacture of the figures. Thus, it is possible to place the date of the two figures in close proximity to the date of the sketchbook, namely, around 1435, or the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

Stylistically, the softly modeled forms and elegant lines of the figures are most closely related to early Pāla-style images. A comparison to the ninth-century Śyāma Tārā in the exhibition (cat. no. 7) demonstrates the inherent similarity of the two conventions, as well as the rather clear Nepali distinctions. The relationship between the fifteenth-century Nepali schools and the Pāla schools must be seen in terms of the internal Nepali developments that took place in the intervening years. Nepali sculptural conventions for the female form had a dynamic development of their own and, deprived of ongoing Pāla influence, diverged along traditional Nepali lines.

The initial relationship of the Nepali convention for the female figure to the Pāla idiom is best understood by a comparison to the ninth- or tenth-century image of Tārā (cat. no. 95), whose narrow shoulders and broad hips, litheness, and comparative attenuation of the body are closer to the Pāla idiom than those of the fifteenth-century Tārā and Bhṛkūtī. By the fifteenth century, as seen in the images of Tārā and Bhṛkūtī, several indigenous conventions had emerged; the hips are narrower by far than the shoulders, and the breasts are considerably less full. It is probable that this is a reflection of the adoption of the Nepali ideal youthful figure type (Buddhist deities are usually said to be sixteen years old). One feature—the total, unadorned nudity of the upper torso—may not be a sculptural convention so much as a sociological one. By the fifteenth century there was a well-established tradition in Nepal of giving gifts of jewelry and garments to the deities, and it was probably for this reason that the upper torso was left bare, so that the figure would provide or even constitute a receptacle for the gifts. As noted above, the remarkable state of preservation of the surface painting on the figures also suggests that the figures were completely covered throughout much of their history.

Other conventions, such as the lower garment, the huge hoop earrings, Bhṛkūtī's *jaṭāmukuta* hair arrangement, the specific iconographic features, and the positional stance of the figures are, even over the intervening years, all traceable to the Pāla school. These figures are the result of a continuous tradition that derives much from the Pāla school but that was never completely dependent on it.

PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-

12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Oriental Art* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 40, fig. 15.

1. For a related image of the Amoghapaśa Avalokiteśvara type, see Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: The Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, [1985]), 113. Usually the specific form of Tārā associated with Avalokiteśvara is Sita Tārā (White Tārā), but in Nepal and in the Nepali Amoghapaśa literature in particular (e.g., the *Amoghapaśa Pūja Vidhi*) the form is Śyāma Tārā (Green Tārā), who is depicted as green in color when specific, text-determined colors are used. See John K. Locke, *Karunamaya: The Cult of Avalokiteśvara—Matsyendranath in the Valley of Nepal* (Kathmandu: Sahayogi Prakashan for the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, 1980), 186-187, 187 n. 15). However, these figures are simply a light "flesh" color, entirely appropriate and characteristic of the period. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether the figure is Sita Tārā or Śyāma Tārā. Accordingly, she is simply identified as Tārā here.
2. Tib. *gtso bo* (pronounced *tsobo*).
3. See Ernst Waldschmidt and Rose Leonore Waldschmidt, trans. by David Wilson, *Nepal: Art Treasures from the Himalayas* (London: Elek Books, 1969), 140-144, pl. 55, for a depiction of Hayagrīva in the Bhaktapur Museum.
4. The specific flowers would have been the blue lotus (*nilotpala*) if she is Śyāma Tārā or the white lotus (*pundarika*) if she is Sita Tārā.
5. The sketchbook has been published by John Lowry, "A Fifteenth Century Sketchbook (Preliminary Study)," in Ariane MacDonald and Yoshiro Imaeda, eds., *Essais sur l'Art du Tibet* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1977), 92, 106 (A10). The designs on the folio include designs for armor, as Lowry states, but the others are textile designs that are closely related to Pāla styles. There are many unresolved issues in the study of the sketchbook. Once this document has been studied fully, it promises to be of great importance for understanding both the history of Nepali art and the role of Nepali artists in Tibet.

## TIBET AND CHINA

# INTRODUCTION TO TIBET AND CHINA

Furthermore, they [his teachers] directed, this style was to incorporate elements from three countries: the forms to be in accordance with the Indian standards, the colouring and textures to be by the Chinese method, and the composition to be by the Tibetan manner.<sup>1</sup>

Writing of the training of the founder of his school of painting and conveying his traditional knowledge of the school's history, the modern Kar ma sGa bris school artist Gega Lama demonstrates beyond any doubt a technical awareness of style and of the influence of different stylistic traditions on Tibetan painting. This knowledge existed and still exists among traditionally trained members of the artistic community in Tibet. While the average Tibetan patron may only have been partially aware of these traditions, and even the great polymath encyclopedists seem to have had only a fragmentary knowledge of it, the traditional heritage of the great artists was passed on in a manner identical to the transmission lineages of the tantric practices.

Although a great deal has been written in western languages on Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan art, there are many aspects of the field about which little or virtually nothing is known. One of these areas is the identification and precise characterization of the various stylistic schools.<sup>2</sup> The study of style has been hampered by several obstacles. First is the situation created by the fact that Tibetan art, which survives in profusion, is like an island in a sea of ignorance. While there are truly vast numbers of paintings and metal images surviving from Tibetan cultural regions, related objects from the surrounding areas (with the exception of Nepal) are neither well known nor studied in detail, and therefore a strong comparative base for stylistic analysis is absent. Recent studies on Pāla India and Nepal have done much to alleviate this situation regarding the southern regions of Tibet; however, the Buddhist art of Kashmir, Central Asia, the Mongol Empire, and the Yuan dynasty and later dynasties of China are little known.

Second, most scholars who have examined Tibetan art have come from either a philological or religious historical background. While their textual and thematic approaches have contributed greatly to the understanding of the religious context and content of various artistic objects, they have been untrained in and on the whole

disinterested in the art historical methodologies that are necessary for stylistic analysis. Art historical study inherently represents an independent and parallel discipline to philological and religious studies, although one that ideally should continuously be enriched by the insights and data yielded by cognate disciplines. Art historical analysis requires training to be able to detect and interpret stylistic changes. The significant changes are often subtle or, because of iconographic demands, subordinated to minor, discretionary elements of the composition.

Third, the visual aspect of Tibetan art is dominated by an almost overwhelmingly complex and riveting iconography that has dominated most books on the subject regardless of the background of a given author. Indeed, Tibetan Buddhist iconography is so complex that the identification of the various deities and elements understandably has been the sole concern of several scholars throughout their careers.

Fourth, virtually all Tibetan art in nontraditional settings—even most of those paintings, except murals—have been removed from their original context and information about their original provenance has been lost.<sup>3</sup> They have been moved or carried from one place to another during the recent political upheavals in Tibet, and the great old Tibetan collections (at Sa skya, for example) are presumably scattered in the ten directions. Thus there is an inadequate base for both geographic and stylistic evaluation. To overcome this difficulty the art historian must sift through the myriad grains of sand searching for clues. The name of a teacher, some demonstrably specific motif or convention, or a particular type of hat may be all that ties a work to a specific time or place. By closely examining thousands of paintings it is possible slowly to begin to provide the framework on which the whole structure must be mounted. It is a time-consuming and often tedious process, and the framework that it provides is subject to ongoing revision.

Fifth, geographically Tibet is many things to many people. For most, it is centered in the Tibetan heartland of the dBus and gTsang districts and radiates from there to a vast expanse of rather empty territory nebulously located between traditional (Han) China and India. The current



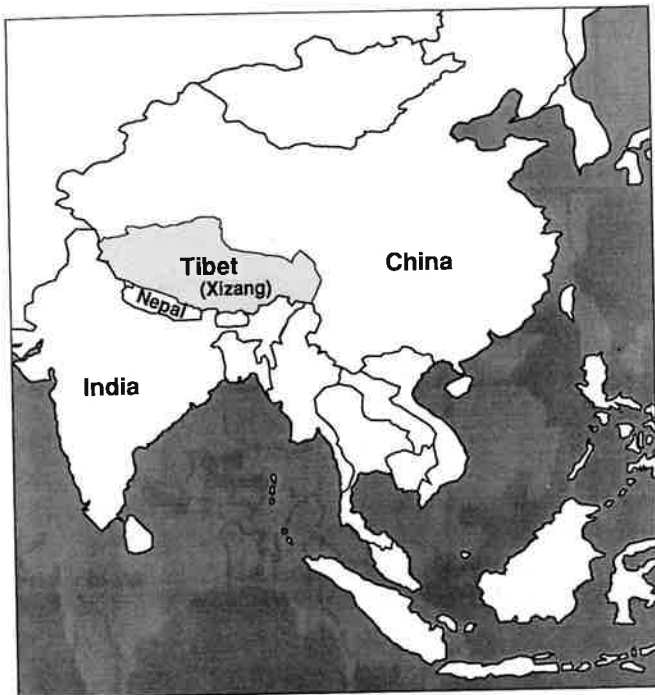


Figure 34. Map of Asia highlighting Tibet (Xizang).

political reality is that Tibet was forcibly annexed by China in 1950 and now is labeled as the Xizang (Hsi tsang) province of China on most maps (fig. 34). Culturally, Tibetan languages, religion, and social organizations extend far beyond this rather specific region. The demarcation of Tibetan culture and of peoples who in one way or another identify themselves as belonging to the "Greater Tibetan" cultural sphere (fig. 35) extends south and east in a broad arc sweeping from eastern Kashmir and the Himalayan tracts of Lahul and Spiti in the west; across the vast range of the Himalayas in northern Nepal, Sikkhim, Bhutan, and



Figure 35. Map showing extent of greater Tibetan cultural sphere.

Arunachal Pradesh; and into northern Myanmar (Burma) in the east. From that base line the Tibetan cultural domain ranges north through the Tibetan heartland, across the vast Central Asian plateaus and ranges, and into the mountainous regions of western China, finally merging into Mongolia. Tibetan Buddhist religious influence (fig. 36) also penetrated all of Mongolia and most of northern and central China, leaving in its wake intellectual and artistic influences that have left their mark until the present day.



Figure 36. Map showing extent of Tibetan Buddhist religious influence.

Given its vast sweep of Asia, cutting across cultural, political, and physical boundaries, Tibetan culture—along with those of China, India and Iran—must be recognized as one of the great germinal cultures of Asia. Its influences were felt throughout most of Inner Asia and stretched northeast as far as the Pacific shores of Asia. Given such an extensive international presence, it is not surprising that most peoples' interest in and awareness of Tibetan civilization has been limited to one or another of the traditionally demarcated geo-political environments. It also is not surprising that both access to and interest in the full range of Tibetan cultural phenomena is limited to a very small number of people. Regrettably, an understanding of the pan-Asian contribution of Tibetan cultural influence and the varied cultural contexts of the objects under examination is the only way in which a full understanding of the artistic tradition can be attained.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the study of the style of Tibetan art and of painting in particular is exceedingly difficult. Unlike western stylistic traditions where "style" and "iconography" are intertwined and iconographic alterations may also constitute stylistic

changes and visa versa, in Tibetan art, *bris* (literally, "drawn" or "written," but also connoting the method and hence the school or style of drawing) indicates a method of making iconographically *correct* images.<sup>3</sup> Thus, an artist who works according to a particular school draws the forms of the figures according to certain principles, but may choose whatever he and the patron prefer for the background and discretionary elements of ornamentation. While it is customary for a pupil to render these discretionary elements in the manner of his master, there is room for individuality, innovation, and creativity. The icons themselves changed far less than the subsidiary elements, and it is on the basis of these secondary features of the paintings that the most significant determinations of style may be made. However, in order to make a meaningful study of these elements, it is necessary to have as thorough a knowledge as possible of the treatment of similar subsidiary elements in Indic, Nepali, Kashmiri, Central Asian, and Chinese Blue-Green school<sup>4</sup> paintings of approximately the same period as the Tibetan painting in question.

For this catalogue, it is in these last two areas of cultural context and stylistic analysis that I have drawn some preliminary conclusions and offered some new hypotheses on Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan art. Even though some advances have been made, these are subject to revision in light of new data that continue to emerge. For example, close study of the inscriptions on the painting of Vajrasattva in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (cat. no. 105) made it possible to date this previously "well known" painting with relative precision, in turn making it possible to date similar and related paintings more accurately. The stylistic chronology and typology presented in this catalogue provide a hypothetical framework for undated pieces, while the datable pieces in turn serve to fine-tune the interpretive structure. The point at which we have arrived in the study of Tibetan painting is perhaps comparable to that of Ananda Coomaraswamy when he published his *Rajput Painting*,<sup>5</sup> in which he first laid out the basic stylistic designations for Indian miniature painting.

To begin, I shall examine the traditional Tibetan understanding of Tibetan art history. That will be followed by a modern historical perspective and introduction to the stylistic definitions incorporating the traditional viewpoint that I have used for the framework of this section of the catalogue. Finally, I will discuss the role of sectarianism in the determination of style in Tibetan painting.

## THE TRADITIONAL HISTORY OF TIBETAN ART<sup>6</sup>

(Note: for the following discussion, the reader may wish to refer to the three large maps of Tibet at the back of the catalogue.)

## Art of the First Propagation

According to the two later traditional accounts of Dagab and Gega Lama,<sup>7</sup> the earliest schools of Tibetan art were of Nepali and Chinese derivation. This view reflects the traditional historical account of the coming of the two queens of Srong brtsan sgam po (born 617, reigned 629-650) to Tibet and the dowries that they brought. The effect of these marriages—the adoption of Buddhism by the kings of the Yar lung dynasty—is called the period of the First Propagation. A representative narrative of the royal marriages explains their influence on Tibetan art and culture:

The king [Srong btsan sgam po], when sixteen, sent his ministers to ask in marriage Khri btsun [literally, "royal lady"], daughter of the king of Nepal, 'Od zer go cha [Skt. Amśuvarman]; the images of Jo bo Mi bskyod rdo rje [the revered Akṣobhyavajra], Byams pa chos 'khor ma [Dharmacakra Maitreya], a sGrol ma [Tārā] of sandal wood and a begging bowl of cat's eye were given as dowry. This was the beginning of the karmic connection which made the Buddha's teaching appear in Tibet. When eighteen, he sent his ministers mGar, etc., with one hundred horsemen to bring back as his wife Lha gcig 'Un shing kong jo [Wen cheng], daughter of the Chinese king Seng ge btsan po. . . .

. . . with some reluctance, the king handed over the princess along with (the image of) Jo bo Sha kya mu ni [Śākyamuni] as dowry. . . .

The princess with the image of the precious Jo bo came before the king who was in the dMar po ri ["Red Mountain," i.e., his new palace in Lhasa, where the Potala now stands], and the great festivities of rejoicing beyond all imagination then made were most appropriate. The king became the patron of the Law [Dharma] and he preached the six syllables [OM MANI PADME HŪM] of sPyan ras gzigs [pronounced Chenrayzee; Skt. Avalokiteśvara] and other kinds of religious texts, such as that of 'Phags pa gshin rje gshed [Skt. Ārya Yamantaka], etc., founded many seminaries for meditation and many temples such as that of Khra 'brug, (the four) mTha' 'dul and the (four) Yang 'dul, etc. Even the two queens founded, respectively, the 'Phrul snang and the Ra mo che, and placed in each of them one of the two Jo bo. To say it briefly, it is certain that the king was an epiphany of the Great Compassionate [Avalokiteśvara], and the two queens also were two epiphanies of the two goddesses [the Chinese queen, Tārā, and the Nepalese queen, Bhṛkūṭī]. . . .

In all other aspects the Law spread widely. . . .

This is called the beginning of the Buddhist Law in Tibet.<sup>8</sup>

The historical accounts of the period of the Dharma Kings (mid-seventh through mid-ninth centuries)<sup>9</sup> report extensive temple construction aided by artisans brought from China and Nepal.<sup>10</sup> Foremost were the temples built to house the queens' images. Originally, the Ra mo che gTsug lha khang was built for the image brought by the Chinese princess. For the image brought by the Nepali princess, the Lhasa gTsug lha khang (better known today as the Jo khang) was built. Both temples still survive, although it is uncertain how much remains of their original forms. The Jo khang has undergone many restorations and additions and is popularly called the "Cathedral of Lhasa." In 1904, Waddell reported that the Ra mo che bore traces of its former grandeur, such as its gilt roof, but had fallen to a ruinous state.<sup>11</sup> Literary evidence and inscriptions name numerous additional temples built during the reign of Srong brtsan sgam po. Among them was a temple (presumably to Mañjuśrī) at Wudaishan (Wu tai shan) in Shaanxi (Shansi)<sup>12</sup> and a series of thirteen temples built to pin down the limbs and thus subdue a pre-Buddhist female deity, or demoness, embodied in the Tibetan landscape and personifying the unruly aspects of pre-Buddhist Tibet.<sup>13</sup> Presumably these temples contained many works of art. The seventh- and eighth-century cave temples of Central Asia and Dunhuang probably give a fair indication of what might be expected to have been in those temples, because Tang (T'ang) histories (*Tang shu*) confirm that the Tibetans took scribes, artists, and craftspeople from their conquered territories in western China and around the Tarim Basin and enlisted their skills for the nobility and aristocracy.

It is clear that there was a significant and complex Chinese component in the early art of Tibet. However, the traditional Tibetan art historians do not give much explicit attention to early Chinese influences. My suggestion is that because the Chinese influence was so pervasive, the Chinese stylistic base became so familiar to the Tibetans that they did not even recognize it as an originally external influence. Incoming Indic and Nepali artistic influences were more noticeable to the Tibetans because they were overlaid on the Chinese-permeated stylistic base. However, politically, as opposed to culturally, China was an old and dangerous adversary. Indeed, it was the major adversary of the Yar lung dynasty, which dominated the whole of Tibet during the seventh and eighth centuries. The Tibetans actually extorted the Chinese princess by the threat of attack by fifty thousand soldiers. It was a major victory for the Tibetans, so the Tibetan historians' emphasis on the Chinese princess is meant more to celebrate the prowess of the empire than simply to report a royal marriage. A political triumph like this at the Tang court would be

considered more newsworthy than ongoing cultural interchange at the borders. Therefore it is the Chinese princess who received most of the attention of the historians.

The case of Tibetan reporting of Nepali influence on early Tibetan art is similar, but with a different slant. The Yar lung kings had been allied politically with the Nepalis since ancient times, and there were longstanding commercial relations between the two countries. The marriage with the Nepali princess was simply a marriage alliance upholding ties between old allies.<sup>14</sup> As was the case with Chinese artistic influence, the Tibetans took the presence of Nepali art and artists in the Tibetan realm for granted. However, some explicit details about artistic exchange are given, namely, the reporting of works carried to Tibet by the Bal sa, Nepali artists being used for the decoration of one temple, and the presence of a set of images that may or may not be Nepali in origin.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, on the whole Nepali and Chinese artistic influences are not described, either because they were overlooked or because they were presumed as a foregone conclusion.

With scant remains of doubtful provenance, the questions surrounding early Tibetan art history can only be raised at this time. However, the historical records and traditional accounts of early Tibetan art clearly indicate that the art of the Second Propagation came to a Tibet already enriched by the arts of Nepal and China.

#### Art of the Second Propagation

The period of the First Propagation came to an end with the persecution of Buddhists by King gLang dar ma around 840 to 842. For more than a century, Buddhism stagnated and struggled to survive. Beginning in the late tenth century, and culminating with the mid-eleventh century proselytization of Buddhism in Tibet by the Indian monk Atiśa, Buddhism underwent a revival that has come to be known as the Second Propagation. During this period, schools of Buddhism were founded—the so-called New Schools (gSar ma)—that formed the basis for those that still are practiced to the present day. The principal source for Second Propagation Buddhism was the Pāla kingdom. Not surprisingly, the artistic styles and iconographic forms of Second Propagation period art are heavily dependent upon the Pāla artistic traditions, although influences from other regions, such as Kashmir, are also evident. So indelible was the imprint of the Pāla traditions on the art of Tibet, and ultimately China as a result of Tibetan influence, that the essence of Pāla art is still visible in Tibetan-style works being produced today.

#### Tāranātha's History

The Tibetan scholar Tāranātha (born 1575) represents an

important early source for subsequent Tibetan scholars and for modern scholarship regarding the background of Tibetan art. Tāranātha's 1608 *rGya gar chos 'byung*, literally, "Arising of the [Buddhist] Dharma in India" (generally translated as *History of Buddhism in India*), gives a brief outline of the history of Buddhist art as found in India, Kashmir, and Nepal:

In the ancient period, the human artists possessed miraculous power and . . . [the] pictures drawn by them created the illusion of being the real objects. For about a hundred years after the *parinirvāṇa* . . . there were many artists like them.

[When there were no more such artists,] celestial artists appeared in human guise and made eight wonderful images in Magadha, like those of the Mahābodhi and Mañjuśrī-duṇḍubhīśvara [unknown]. The *caitya*-s of the eight sacred places and the inner boundary walls of Vajrāsana were built by the Yakṣa artists during the period of Aśoka and the Nāga artists built many (images) during the time of Nāgārjuna [first century B.C. in the Tibetan tradition].

The (images) thus made by the Deva-s, Nāga-s and Yakṣa-s created the illusion of the real objects for many years. . . .

After that, for a long time there developed the traditions of different artistic techniques depending on the individual talents of various artists. There remained no uniform tradition of the technique (of image-making).

Later on, during the period of king Buddhapaṅka [unknown] there lived an artist called Bimbāsāra, who produced the most wonderful architectural sculptures and paintings: these could be compared to those of the celestial artists of the earlier period.

Numerous artists became his followers. This artist [Bimbāsāra] was born in Magadha. Therefore, the artists following his school were said to belong to the school of the *madhya-deśa* art [dBus bris, discussed below], wherever they might have been born.

During the period of king Śīla [unknown], there was an extraordinarily skilled icon-maker called Srigadhārī, who was born in the region of Maru [Gujarat]. He made many sculptures in the tradition of the Yakṣas. The school following his technique is known as the school of old western art [Nub rnying bris].

During the time of king[s] Devapāla and Śrī Dharmapāla, there lived a highly skilled artist called Dhīmān in the Varendra region. His son was called Bīṭpalo. These two followed the tradition of the Nāga artists and practised various techniques like those of metal-casting, engraving [chasing] and

painting. The tradition of the technique of the father became different from that of the son. The son used to live in Bhaṅgala. The cast-images made by the followers of both of them were called the eastern icons [Shar sku], wherever these followers might have been born.

In painting, the tradition of those that followed the father was called the tradition of eastern paintings [Shar ris in the text], while those who followed the son were known as those belonging to the school of *madhya-deśa* painting [dBus kyi ri mo in the text], because this [school] was widespread mainly in Magadha [see following discussion].

In Nepal also the earlier tradition of art was similar to the old western (style of Indian art). The paintings and bell-metal castings (of Nepal) of the middle period are said to belong to the Nepalese school [Bal bris], although these resemble the eastern [school of] (Indian art).

No distinct (tradition) is found (in Nepal) in the later period.

In Kashmir also was followed the tradition of the early central art [dBus bris] and of the old western [Nub rnying bris] art. In the later period one called Hasurāja [unknown] introduced new techniques both in sculpture and painting. It is now called the art of Kashmir [Kha che bris].

Skilled image-makers abounded in every place wherever the Law of the Buddha flourished. In the regions that came under the influence of the *mleccha*-s ["foreigners," presumably Muslims in this case] the art of image-making declined and the regions under the influence of the *tīrthika*-s ["non-Buddhists," particularly Hindus and Jains] had only inferior image-makers. That is why, practically nothing survives today of the traditions of those mentioned above.

In Pu-khañ [Pagan, in ancient Myanmar] and southern India still thrives the tradition of image-making. But it is clear that their tradition of art did not reach Tibet in the past.<sup>16</sup>

Even though Tāranātha wrote as late as the seventeenth century and included some legendary material in his accounts, it is widely recognized that he had legitimate early sources at his disposal. Accordingly, his history is neither to be dismissed as legend nor even to be taken lightly. Any of his statements must be regarded as potentially valid.

India

What we may glean from Tāranātha's passage about the Pāla period and the transmission of stylistic conventions



into Tibet is a general understanding of the conditions in India and the Tibetan perception of artistic styles in both India and Nepal during about the ninth through the thirteenth centuries.

The first school relevant to the study of Tibetan painting that Tāranātha discusses is that of the Nub rnying bris, or "Ancient Western" school. The precise identities of King Śīla, of Maru in Gujarat, and of the artist Śrīgadhara have not been ascertained by modern scholarship. However, the general period under discussion can be deduced. Tāranātha uses "ancient" in a chronology consisting of "ancient," "early," "middle," and "recent" periods. His term "early" refers to Magadha before the Second Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet (ca. mid-eleventh through mid-twelfth centuries), that is, the ninth and tenth centuries. Therefore, his term "ancient" must refer to the time prior to the rise of the Pālas of Magadha, that is, ca. 800 and before. How much before is difficult to determine.

Where the west is located is more problematic. Since Bodh Gayā was literally the center of the Buddhist universe, it is probable that "central" India (Tib. dBus) refers to the Magadhan heartland (now central, sub-Gangetic Bihar) and its immediate environs. The "west" (Tib. nub) was probably someplace west of but adjacent to this "central" India. Thus, there is a strong possibility that Tāranātha's "west" refers to the region just north of the Vindhya (i.e. ancient Vidiśā and the surrounding area). He is unlikely to have been referring to the now ruined city of Valabhī, the capital of the Maṭraka dynasty (ca. 502-700),<sup>17</sup> and one of the great Buddhist centers of the time, because it is so much farther west and probably beyond the sphere of Tibetan awareness of Indic geography. In any case, no paintings from either region survive, and modern art historians have yet to define early western and central Indic metal images closely enough to identify definitive regional stylistic differences. Although there is a vast amount of pre-twelfth-century stone sculpture from these regions, there is little else to suggest what the "Ancient Western" tradition might have been. Accordingly, we can only generalize that Nub rnying bris was a pre-ninth-century style from someplace west of Vārāṇasī in Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, we would expect Gupta or post-Gupta styles to be generally reflective of the Nub rnying style, but nothing definite can be known.

Tāranātha credits Dhīmān and Bīṭpalo with founding the Shar, or Eastern school, in Magadha and Vaṅga, under the patronage of two Pāla kings. There is no question regarding the dating of these artists. Dharmapāla and Devapāla were the second and third kings of the Pāla line, who reigned in the late eighth and early ninth centuries respectively. It is not as clear where these two artists worked. According to Tāranātha, they both cast images (*sku*; pronounced ku) as well as made drawings (*bris*; pronounced ree). Although their cast-image style(s)

remained close enough that they were referred to as masters of the Shar, or Eastern, style sculpture (Tib. Shar sku), a name applied regardless of the place or origin of the actual casting master, their painting styles diverged. Apparently the father's style differed from that of the son and became known as Shar bris (Eastern style painting), yet the son, who is said to have lived in Bhaṁgala (which I would normally render as Bengal), is said to have belonged to the dBus bris, or central (Indic) painting school. Accordingly, it seems improbable that the phonetically spelled Bhaṁ ga la mentioned in the text is actually Bengal. If the father lived in Vaṅga, the central portion of the Bengal region, and his son's work was called "central" rather than eastern, then Bhaṁgala must be somewhere west of Vaṅga in the central Bihar region, i.e. ancient Magadha.<sup>18</sup>

As far as is known, the Indic Buddhists of the eighth through twelfth centuries and their Tibetan successors did not use (and still do not use) morphological evolution as a criterion for "stylistic" discussions. A school has a certain methodology of creating images and sets of minor elements that are to be included in the compositions. The actual anatomy, facial features, and some of the iconographically dictated (or iconomorphically determined) elements may not vary appreciably from one artist to the next. Further, the absence of even a single confirmed work by either Dhīmān or Bīṭpalo makes a determination of their styles virtually impossible.

As inconclusive regarding styles and confusing regarding locations as it may be, Tāranātha's passage makes it clear that he credits the works by Dhīmān and Bīṭpalo during the reigns of Dharmapāla and Devapāla as representing the beginning and virtual end of artistic development in the Pāla domains. The absence of further comment by Tāranātha only amounts to negative evidence and as such is inherently suspect, but it does limit the usefulness of his account. Although he noted differences between the two artists at the beginning of the Pāla period, he made no concrete observations regarding either stylistic types or chronological developments. I suspect that this may reflect the nature of the traditional sources available to Tāranātha. It seems that interesting personal details (e.g., that a son dared to diverge from his father's school or, as discussed below, the artist sMan's marital problems) are more easily remembered and transmitted than nuances of stylistic discussion. Thus, the traditional history, while highlighting the main individuals and events, tends to dwell on the anecdotal and idiosyncratic. Such stories provide only a bare armature on which to mold the clay of history. Since Tibetan art histories tend to offer specific incidents and anecdotes about individuals and to avoid historical generalities, it is necessary to extrapolate from the specific to the general in the attempt to develop an outline of the history of Tibetan painting.

Ultimately it has to be determined if a meaningful attempt can be made to reconstruct the schools of Dhīmān and Bitpalo as seen by Tāranātha. Since they cannot specifically be identified in surviving works from India,<sup>19</sup> and since dBus bris plays only a secondary role in the traditional history of Tibetan painting, dBus bris is effectively lost. A careful evaluation of all known early Tibetan paintings has yielded nothing that could be ascribed to the dBus bris school on anything but the most tenuous grounds. Therefore, I have elected to follow the oral Tibetan tradition and to discuss the early paintings in terms of their relationships to Shar mthun bris.

This point must be made very clearly, lest the obvious discrepancy in names cause confusion. Simply stated, there are two definitions of Shar, or “east,” in Tibetan artistic terminology that arise from two different Tibetan nomenclatures concerning the geography of India. The historians and polymaths described the Indic realm as having three areas, “Nub”—west, “dBus”—central, and “Shar”—east (fig. 37). However, the artists and their

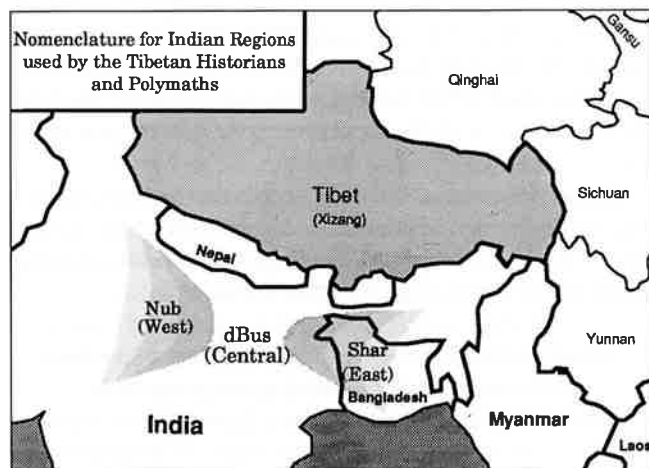


Figure 37. Map showing names of Indian regions used by Tibetan historians and polymaths.

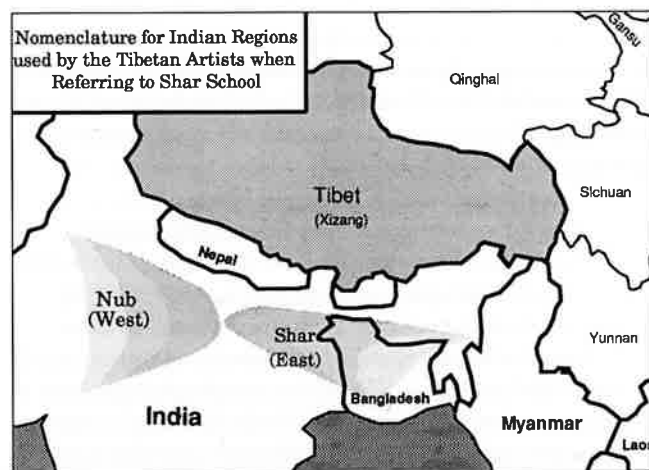


Figure 38. Map showing names of Indian regions used by Tibetan artists.

patrons seem to have ignored dBus, subsuming it into the Shar designation (fig. 38). Furthermore, they saw Shar as the source of the Buddhologically correct style. Accordingly, my decision to use only the Shar designation directly reflects the actual practice of the Tibetan artists themselves.

However, as will be seen in the catalog, there are clear relationships between the Tibetan painting schools and both Bihari schools and the more eastern schools of Vaṅga and further Bengal. Therefore, it is preferable to use the Tibetan terminology and to refer to the whole as Shar mthun bris. This is not fully consistent with Tāranātha's account of Dhīmān and Bitpalo, which may distinguish between them; however, it is consistent with later usage. Inasmuch as Tāranātha's account of the Pāla schools stops with the two founders of the style, ignoring four centuries of stylistic development and regional divergencies, one is left with a term that covers the whole of what is conventionally designated as “eastern India” (including the modern nation of Bangladesh) even to the present day. While this term may lack a desirable degree of specificity, it does provide a sufficient starting point for the discussion of Tibetan painting styles.

## Nepal

Tāranātha's statements about the art of Nepal, while extremely concise, reflect what I have observed in my own studies of Nepali art. He divides the development of Nepali artistic periods into three time frames—“early,” “middle,” and “later”—the first two partially overlapping the span of the Pāla period. He states that “in Nepal the earlier tradition of art was similar to the old western school [Nub rnying bris].” “Earlier” is the key word here. Falling between his “ancient” and “middle” periods, it would seem to imply a time well before Tāranātha's own, but following the “ancient” period. Moreover, since the period of the Second Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet is the time when both eastern Indic and Nepali artistic influence reached their zenith, it would also seem that, from Tāranātha's viewpoint, anything predating the Second Propagation would be considered “early.” Thus, I would assign Tāranātha's “early” Nepali tradition to the ninth, tenth, and early eleventh centuries (ca. 850 to ca. 1050). I tentatively have identified remnants of an “Old Nepali” school of painting and sculpture (see cat. nos. 89 and 90). It is deeply rooted in what would appear to be Gupta heartland traditions, although with a generous admixture of Nepali compositional and decorative elements. Nonetheless, the basic figural and landscape conventions all have prototypes in either Gupta or early post-Gupta works from north-central India.

The “middle” period of Nepali art is said by Tāranātha to resemble the Eastern school of Indic art (Tib. Shar

school), even though it is said to be called by the name of the Nepali school (Tib. Bal school). If we take this statement to apply to the painting of the period of the Second Propagation and the immediately following three centuries (ca. 1050-1400), this statement does reflect the reality of both Nepali and Tibetan paintings in the Nepali manner (Tib. Bal bris) as we find them surviving to the present day. It would appear that the Nepalis discovered a market for Pāla-style paintings in Tibet. The resultant convergence of the Nepali tradition and the eastern Indic (Pāla) school complicates the determination of the origins of the Tibetan paintings of this period. Those paintings that I have placed in the Transitional Shar mthun bris category exhibit predominantly eastern Indic characteristics, although they all contain elements that suggest the hand of a Nepali artist and his culturally based design sense.

Finally, Tāranātha states that there is no distinct tradition in Nepal during the "later" period. We can only assume that this is the period leading up to the time that Tāranātha himself was writing and therefore describes, ca. 1400-1608, or, from the fifteenth through the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Since Tāranātha was a Jo nang pa and the Jo nang sect centered on the gTsang River just north of Sa skya, we must assume that his experience included substantial direct observation of both Nepali artists and Bal bris artists working in the immediate area. gTsang was famed as the center of the Bal bris school, where great Tibetan artists gained renown for their mastery of the Bal bris technique and where such innovators as sMan mastered their skills in the Bal bris tradition before diverging from it. Thus, Tāranātha's statement appears to reflect the similarities between Tibetan Bal bris and Nepali painting (Bal bris). This comparison has been examined at length in the catalog entries of two Cakrasaṃvara images (cat. nos. 92 and 117).

#### Later Tibetan Developments

Including Tāranātha's account of the Indic sources of the artistic traditions in Tibet, there are five basic sources for the traditional history of Tibetan painting presently known to me. The first two are by two Tibetan historical polymaths, Tāranātha, discussed above,<sup>20</sup> and Kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899), one of the leaders of the nineteenth-century intellectual renaissance, in his *Shes bya kun khyab*, or "Encyclopedia" (in which he essentially follows Tāranātha).<sup>21</sup> Both offer fairly cryptic accounts of the history of Tibetan art as understood in central Tibet (gTsang and dBus districts). E. Gene Smith, in his introduction to Lokesh Chandra's edition of the *Shes bya kun khyab*, fortunately recognized the importance of the passages on art and has brought them to the attention of the art historical community.<sup>22</sup> Smith's version of the passages of these two traditional writers can be considered a third important

document of the traditional history. The fourth source is the modern Tibetan writer Loden Sherap Daggyab in his *Tibetan Religious Art*.<sup>23</sup> Drawing extensively on textual traditions, Daggyab has amassed a useful collection of citations regarding the origins and development of Tibetan art. The fifth and most recent source is another modern Tibetan scholar, Gega Lama, whose *Principles of Tibetan Painting* contains yet another version of the traditional history as transmitted by his own school of painting, Karma sga bris.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, either the traditional histories by Tāranātha and Kong sprul or some closely related source served as the basis for several oral accounts of the history of Tibetan painting that I received from Tibetan informants.<sup>25</sup> Fortunately, the oral accounts I received had the benefit of being enriched by the vast store of cultural history and knowledge that the high-ranking nobility and clergy have at their command. By synthesizing information from traditional written and oral sources and direct observation of surviving paintings and works of art from the entire Himalayan and Tibetan cultural sphere through eastern China, it has been possible to develop a tentative outline of the history of Tibetan painting. This history concerns itself with both the spread of major stylistic influences and with the local or regional developments of style.

All of the accounts mentioned above take Tāranātha's history for granted. The authors agree that Bal bris was the basic Tibetan painting style through the fifteenth century. Kong sprul summarizes the situation in a verse:

From the Nepalese style (appeared) the sMan (and)  
mKhyen Schools of painting (making) two;  
That of Byi'u (made) the third. Through (the efforts  
of) the three (who bore the name of) bKra shis,  
The sGar bris School came into being. In casting and  
sculpture there also appeared a succession of  
craftsmen.<sup>26</sup>

In later passages, he explains this terse poem. I summarize Smith's translation of the exegesis, with bracketed additions from Daggyab and Gega Lama and my own explanatory notes:

In the beginning the Nepalese tradition was widespread, then [in either, the fifteenth century {Dy 37}, in 1409 {Smith p. 43 n. 73}, or in 1440 {GL46}] sMan bla don grub was born in Lho brag. At the time of his birth vermilion [pigment] was discovered there [in Lho brag]. [This is an auspicious sign that a great painter has been born. JCH] [He was a very learned individual. GL 46] Because of [differences with, GL 46] his wife he left home to wander and came to Tsang [District, JCH] [and to Sa skya, Dy

37], where he studied painting with rDo pa bkra shis rgyal po (otherwise unknown) [who was an expert in the Nepalese school, GL 46]. Because he had seen Chinese embroidered *thang kas* [? type of textile not clear in text, JCH; or tapestry, Dy 37] in his former existence, he remembered his former existence ["his work came to have a distinct affinity for Chinese work," Dy 37; therefore] he founded a school of painting called the "Great sMan thang [ka]" (Tib. sMan thang chen). [His paintings are known as *Idan lugs*, Dy 37.] The traditions flourished in the lineages of both his sons and his disciples [or, 'Jam byangs and his nephew Zhi ba 'od, GL 46].<sup>27</sup>

The combined statements of the traditional written sources express that sMan was skilled in the Bal bris school and at some point in his career began to add visually significant Chinese elements to the compositions. Because the rendition of deities is iconometrically determined and conservatively, even rigorously, maintained, the elements that sMan altered were probably the discretionary and background elements. A tentative attribution of a painting of an unidentified teacher (cat. no. 122) to this important style bridges the gap between the heavily Pāla-dependent Nepali tradition and the primarily Chinese-dependent sMan bris gSar ma<sup>28</sup> of recent times.

After sMan, two of his followers founded apparently closely related schools. Again I will summarize Smith's translation with bracketed additions from Dayab and Gega Lama and my own explanatory notes:

Next there came mKhyen brtse who was born at Gon dkar sgang stod. He founded a style that branched off from that of sMan. These two, sMan and mKhyen, became famed as the 'Sun and Moon' [of painting, JCH] in the Land of the Snows (i.e., Tibet).

There also appeared one known as the *sprul sku* Byi'u,<sup>29</sup> who was called that because he was always travelling about for the sake of artistic craftsmanship. [Inseparable from his drawing materials, he travelled all over the country to study different schools. Dy38] He founded a school differing from the former two in the extraordinary use of brilliant colors. [He was also clever in how he used shading and depth of colors. Dy 38]

Later [a] gTsan[g] pa, Chos dbyings rgya mtsho [who was born in 1645, GL 46, or active in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, Dy 38] founded the new sMan bris school. [Subsequently(?) JCH] many other schools were developed, but most belonged to one of the above three traditions. [After the death of the first Paṇ chen rin po che, bLo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan [1570-1662], i.e., about 1662 or 1663, Chos dbyings rgya mtsho decorated a temple and a *mchod rten*. Dy 38] [The style he founded was

called sMan gSar or gTsang bris, after the province in which he was born. GL 46]<sup>30</sup>

Significantly, all of these three artists (sMan, mKhyen, Byi'u) were gTsang painters, and therefore this is essentially a history of painting in the Sa skya sect. Smith notes that he had been shown Sa skya and Ngor (a Sa skya subsect) paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as examples of the mKhyen bris style. It is therefore possible that one of the paintings in the exhibition (cat. no. 123) from that period that exhibits Chinese influence would have been considered to belong to the mKhyen school. Another painting, the vibrantly colored Kharamukha Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 121), seems to display the characteristic use of color attributed to Byi'u. Unfortunately there is no corroborating information for any of these attributions, and so they must remain tentative until more supporting evidence is forthcoming.

## A MODERN OVERVIEW

(NOTE: in order to gain an overview of these events, the reader may wish to refer to the Tibetan Timeline ((Appendix III, Chart 12) for a synopsis or to the Tibetan Chronology (Appendix III, Chart 13) for a detailed account of events.)

Emerging from the mists of legend from about A.D. 600 the kings of Yar lung dominated the Tibetan political scene, forging an empire that could, and did, simultaneously face off the Arabs and Turks with impunity in the west and forced tribute from the Chinese in the east.<sup>31</sup> Under the leadership of the Yar lung kings, and especially under the three who became known as the Dharma Kings (Tib. Chos rgyal), both Chinese and Indian Buddhism were introduced into Tibet. The first Dharma King was Srong brtsan sgam po (pronounced Songtsen gampo; reigned ca. 629-ca. 650), whose marriage to the Chinese princess Wencheng (Wen ch'eng) in 641 traditionally marks the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. A first wife, known only as the Nepali princess, previously had begun this process and presumably continued to strengthen the Indic connection. Thus, in the mid-seventh century the way was opened for further Buddhist influence in Tibet. During the reigns of his immediate successors among the Yar lung kings, Buddhism appears to have remained in the background but always to have been a constant presence and received some degree of royal patronage.

The second of the great Dharma Kings, King Khri srong lde brtsan (pronounced Tisong daysen; reigned 755-ca. 780), embraced Buddhism and invited both Indian and Chinese teachers to Tibet. It was with his patronage that both Śāntarakṣita and slightly later Padmasambhava (both active in Tibet in the 770s and early 780s?) came to Tibet. Under Khri srong lde brtsan, Buddhism was made



the state religion in 779, supplanting the indigenous shamanistic practices (usually known as Bön). This placed the new religion in the foreground, causing considerable distress to many of the old nobility and shamanistic priests who were displaced by the decision. However, under the dynamic and powerful Khri strong lde brtsan, there was little they could do.

In 781 a request was sent to China for Chinese teachers of the Dharma, and apparently several Chinese came to Tibet shortly thereafter. Religiously it was apparently a tumultuous time with considerable debate between the Indian and Chinese factions as to whose version(s) of the teachings were correct. In ca. 792 a Buddhist disputation was convened at Lhasa to determine which position or faction would receive official sanction.<sup>32</sup> In a decision that would affect Tibetan Buddhism for the rest of its history, the issue officially was resolved in favor of the Indian Mahāyānists. This set the stage for Tibetan Buddhists subsequently to look continually to India as the "correct" source of Buddhist teaching.

Under the third of the Dharma Kings, Khri gtsug lde brtsan (pronounced Titsuk daytsen), better known as Ral pa can (lived 815-840), Buddhism flourished and temples multiplied. Unfortunately, this golden age brutally was terminated by Ral pa can's successor.

Indeed, between 840-842, the period of the First Propagation, or of the "Three Dharma Kings," came to an abrupt end. Buddhism suffered intense persecution at the hands of the last of the Yar Lung kings, gLang dar ma (pronounced Langdarma; "Actions of a Bull"). Both politically and religiously Tibetan imperial cohesiveness disintegrated, and the political system of Tibet returned to the multiple principalities, or "Valley Kingdoms," of pre-empire days. Needless to say, many monuments of the period and virtually all movable works of art vanished. No paintings and only a few metal images survive even to hint at what once existed.<sup>33</sup>

gLang dar ma was assassinated in 842, and with his death the vast and once-powerful Tibetan Empire disintegrated into thirteen regional principalities. The warring factions vied with each other for supremacy, each one hoping to achieve a resumption of the power of empire. It was a time of violent turbulence and of a rapid decline of the Dharma. Of religion during the period between the persecution of gLang dar ma and the Second Propagation, Tāranātha writes:

At that time in Ü [dBus District or central Tibet] and Tsañ [gTsang District, south of the gTsang po River and west of central Tibet] religious discipline, the exposition of the Doctrine, and the study and preaching of it had altogether ceased. The stewards of the monasteries wore skirts with collars, called themselves Sthaviras and Arhats, and said that they were observing the monastic rules. In reality, they kept them only during the short time of the 3

summer months. Then, having declared that the time of fast had passed away, they did no more observe (the rules prescribed for the clergy). The exorcists did not understand the meaning of the Tantras and indulged in adultery and the like.<sup>34</sup>

It is against this background that the period known as the Second Propagation of the Dharma in Tibet begins. Traditionally, it is traced to the return in 978 of kLu mes and Sum pa<sup>35</sup> from Khams<sup>36</sup> to central Tibet, where they tried to restore the religion and built numerous temples. In particular, they taught the Vinaya and were quite successful in restoring the doctrine. However, the real Second Propagation took place in quite another part of Tibet.

At the same time as the events in dBus and apparently for totally altruistic purposes, the royal family of Gu ge (Appendix III, Chart 14) also took an interest in Buddhism and invited teachers from the Indic regions to renew the teachings. In about 970 the monk-king, Ye shes 'od of Gu ge, sent a brilliant young scholar-monk, Rin chen bzang po (pronounced Rinchen zangpo; lived 958-1055), to Kashmir to study Buddhism and to bring teachers and artists back to spread the Dharma and create and decorate monuments.<sup>37</sup> In the course of three trips to Kashmir, during which he studied with as many as seventy-five teachers there, Rin chen bzang po founded a quasi-legendary 108 temples, and in a dramatically long and successful career affected life in the western Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Zangskar, and the whole mNga ris area.<sup>38</sup>

Ye shes 'od also invited the Indic monks Dharmapāla (not the Pāla dynasty king of the same name) and his three disciples Sādhupāla, Guṇapāla, and Prajñāpāla (all active in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries). In the reign of his successor, Lha sde, the scholar Subhūti Śrīśānti, more generally known as Kha che Pañ chen, was invited.<sup>39</sup> Many translation projects were undertaken at this time, and in general Buddhism prospered under the patronage of the Kings of Gu ge.

It was into this very positive and receptive environment that Atīśa, the real catalyst of the Second Propagation, was to be invited. Atīśa was, at least in the view of his biographers, the archetype of the perfect Indian teacher.<sup>40</sup> He was born in 982 into the royal family of Vikramapura (an important Pāla capital but now a mostly unexcavated site in the vicinity of Dhaka in Bangladesh). After travelling to central Magadha and studying and practicing tantra there until he was twenty-nine, he accepted monastic ordination and became a *sthavira* ("elder") of the Mahāsaṅghika school.<sup>41</sup> He continued his studies at the monastic college of Uddandapura (unexcavated, but located at what is now Bihār Sharif in Bihar State, India) and with numerous teachers.<sup>42</sup> Later he became the *mahāsthavira* ("great elder") at the monastic college of Vikramaśīla (possibly modern Antichak in Bhagalpur District, Bihar State), where he was residing

when invited to Tibet.

In Tibet, Rin chen bzang po's patron, Ye shes 'od, had abdicated his throne but retained his military command. Fighting under the banner of his third successor,<sup>43</sup> 'Od lde (pronounced Öday), Ye shes 'od was captured by the Qurluq, who demanded a ransom of his weight in gold for his return. Much gold was raised, but upon being visited by 'Od lde's younger brother Byang chub 'od (pronounced Jang chupö), Ye shes 'od insisted that since he was old and "of no use to anyone" the gold should be used to bring *paṇḍitas* from India.<sup>44</sup>

Byang chub 'od asked Nag tsho tshul khriṃs rgyal ba Lo tsa ba (pronounced Naktso tshultrim gyalwa lotsawa; 1011-?), a native of Gung thang who previously had been to India, to invite Atiśa. Going to Vikramaśīla, Nag tsho successfully convinced Atiśa to come to Tibet, thereby changing the course of Tibetan history. Leaving in 1040, the *paṇḍita* Atiśa travelled via Bodh Gayā in Bihar and Kathmandu in Nepal, where he spent the year 1041 and founded Thām bahal (Skt. Sthām Vihāra). 'Brom ston, Atiśa's Tibetan disciple and biographer, informs us that, at his departure from Vikramaśīla, Atiśa travelled with sixty packs on thirty horses and was accompanied by twenty attendants.<sup>45</sup> While Bu ston is silent on the nature of the contents of those packs, it is the only recorded instance where it is virtually certain that a significant quantity of religious objects would have been en route to Tibet. Upon reaching mNga ris, Atiśa resided at mTho gling (pronounced Toling) monastery for three years (1042-1044). There, in 1044, Atiśa demonstrated the superiority of his knowledge to Rin chen bzang po and gave him initiation (in effect, converted him) to Atiśa's own teachings, setting the stage for all of Rin chen bzang po's many followers also to follow Atiśa. After three years in mTho gling Atiśa set out to return to India. Just as he was leaving to return to India, he met 'Brom ston (pronounced Dromtön), who was to become his principal disciple.

'Brom ston (1003-1065) had heard of Atiśa's arrival in mNga ris and on learning of his reputation as a scholar went there to greet him and to invite him to come to dBus District and to continue his teaching there. Within days of their meeting, Atiśa changed his plan of returning to India and set out with 'Brom toward central Tibet, stopping at sKyī rong monastery, where they spent the year 1045.<sup>46</sup> Journeying on into central Tibet, Atiśa and his disciple visited many locations. At one place, the 'On lha khang ke ru, an image of Atiśa was painted on the walls.<sup>47</sup> He then took up residence at bSam yas, where he translated a number of texts and inspected the famous library of works collected by Padmasambhava (and presumably others). He continued his travels in central Tibet and finally, succumbing to a wasting disease of some sort, died in the autumn of 1054 without having returned to India. By 1056 'Brom had founded the Rwa sgreṅs, where he established

a shrine to the master.<sup>48</sup>

While accounts vary regarding the number, it is known that Atiśa travelled with twenty or more companions. Perhaps some of these were artists who could make the images and paintings used in the practices taught by Atiśa. Whatever the case, it is within Atiśa's lifetime that the styles and iconographic conventions of eastern India and especially of the Magadhan area arrived in Tibet. In contrast to the situation in Nepal, in Tibet the introduction of Pāla religious influence and the accompanying styles in both painting and sculpture is a well-known event. It is universally ascribed to the coming of the Indian *paṇḍita* Atiśa, who had been the elder at the monastic university of Vikramaśīla in ancient Aṅga (now eastern Bihar).

Once Atiśa had visited Tibet and demonstrated his knowledge and teaching skills, the door was open to the Indic realms. Tibetan pilgrims by the hundred and scores of Indian *paṇḍitas* moved back and forth relatively freely for the next two hundred years, most frequently travelling through Nepal en route. *The Blue Annals* lists more than one hundred Indian teachers and dozens of Tibetans who made the journey. How many more made the trip without historical recognition can only be speculated, but it was probably in the hundreds or even thousands.

This period of learning and religious exchange came to a crushing end with the devastation that the Muslim conquerors wrought on the Bihar and greater Bengal regions. For example, the population of the great university at Nālandā had gone from thousands of monks to only thirty-five individuals by the time of Dharmasvāmin's visit in 1235. Most of these monks attended an old teacher who, it appears, had determined to "go down with the ship" rather than attempt to escape but who finally allowed himself to be removed to safety by Dharmasvāmin.<sup>49</sup> The vast libraries of Uddāṇḍapura and Nālandā had vanished, presumably burned in the raids of 1200-1201. Many of the finds of metal images from the period are in the form of hoards, hidden from the plunderers or, in the case of the Nālandā images, found halfway along a hall and showing evidence of having been burned in the fire that destroyed the building, as though they had been dropped in haste when the fire caused the ceiling to collapse. Everything one reads in the historical sources and sees at the sites themselves tells of almost universal murder, pillage, and destruction.<sup>50</sup>

Although Buddhism persisted in a very limited way in Bihar until at least the fifteenth century and visits to Bodh Gayā by foreign pilgrims never really stopped, by 1200 Buddhism in the former Pāla lands effectively was finished. For reasons that are unclear from the historical record, the Muslims seem to have had a particular hatred of the Buddhists and to have concentrated their attacks especially on the Buddhist monks and their monasteries.

Because these monasteries were the main foci of Buddhist practice and knowledge, their destruction, along with the unbridled genocide of the monks, left the lay Buddhists of the region leaderless. Unlike Hinduism, with its mainstay of simple acts of faith and the services performed by village priests, Buddhism relied on highly trained technicians, great charismatic teachers, and the ritual and educational activities of the monastic universities to sustain its existence.

It has become a widely accepted premise that as a result of the raids and conquests by the Muslims, monks and perhaps artisans from the Bihar and Bengal regions of ancient India emigrated to Tibet, Nepal, and Southeast Asia. This "refugee factor" has become a component of most serious stylistic studies of art in these outlying regions. However, in spite of the fact that such emigration is known to have taken place, it is difficult to trace the impact of any newcomers in the artistic traditions of Tibet. It is likely that this difficulty is due to the fact that the Pāla artistic idioms were already so thoroughly integrated into Tibetan culture, and Tibetan knowledge of the Pāla idioms was so current, that even a new wave of emigrés did not visibly alter the artistic direction. A detailed examination of virtually every published early painting and a number more in private collections, as well as hundreds of early metal images, has led me to conclude that there was no detectable wave of artistic influence. Even works that at first glance would seem to suggest the possibility of such a thrust, such as the Transitional Shar mthun bris paintings of Ṣaḍākṣarī Avalokiteśvara (cat. no. 110) and Tārā (cat. no. 113), can be demonstrated to be the products of internal stylistic developments. Whether or not new artistic directions emerged, it is likely that the advent of Buddhists from the Pāla realm further invigorated the Tibetan tradition.

#### METHODOLOGY AND THE DEFINITION OF STYLE IN TIBETAN ART

What theory or theories may be applied to arrange and classify the morphological phenomena that are observable in works of art? As we have seen in the discussion of methodology in Nepali painting, there was a very sophisticated understanding of style and the concepts of style on the part of traditional Himalayan artists. Because of this sophistication there are many factors to be taken into account. Religious intent, level of patronage (a generous or wealthy patron may hire better artists or use more expensive materials than a frugal or poor one), regionalization, insularity (e.g., Polynesian cultures had little external influence until the arrival of the Europeans, in contrast to Venice, which was constantly bombarded by influences brought home by its traders), and sociological

purpose (e.g., ostentatious display versus personal inner development) all play major roles in artistic development. Yet even in a very stable, conservative society such as Tibet, in which most of the foregoing factors were predetermined and constant, artistic styles still evolve—driven by little more than the personality of the artists and their patrons.

#### STYLISTIC PROGRESSION

While no rate of change can actually be calculated, there is a general tendency toward a commonly desired goal. In the arts of traditional societies, the trend is usually a steady progression of increasing morphological intricacy.<sup>51</sup> In any stylistic continuum these changes may be understood as an empirical calculus of increasing elaboration. Moreover, as these elaborations increase, a point will be reached at which added complication or intricacy will become meaningless. It is at these points—i.e., moments of chaotic disruption—that major stylistic adjustments, innovations, or influences are most openly received, almost as a relief from the ongoing intensification of the developmental trend. (For example, the Impressionist reaction to the classicism of the French Academy typifies chaotic disruption.) The increasing elaboration may take several forms, and it is up to the evaluator to bring all of his or her cultural awareness to bear on their recognition. Because the system is open rather than closed, it does not and cannot, even in the case of revivals of antique styles, loop back on itself, returning to some fixed starting point like *pi* and starting over again. The process is non-mathematical, because it is subject to virtually infinite external influences. Progress is therefore unpredictable in a mathematical sense.<sup>52</sup> Yet hindsight enables the historian to trace the progression along its continuum and locate the disruptions accurately.

There is a perfect example of a developmental continuum leading to a chaotic disruption in the history of Tibetan painting. The Sa skya Bal bris school (defined below and in the relevant entries) comes into existence with such paintings as a representation of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 116), develops into a mature, independent school as seen in a painting of Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 117), progresses through a developing complexity (cat. nos. 118, 120, and 121), and undergoes a disruption with completely new elements grafted onto the tradition by recognized experimenters who in effect found their own schools, sMan bris and mKhyen bris (cat. nos. 122 and 123).

By seeing Tibetan art as a series of parallel regional continua interacting with each other as well as receiving outside influences from both Indic and Nepali sources, and then basing a general evaluation of the paintings on two major factors—closeness to the Pāla conventions and

the trend of increasing elaboration—it is possible to establish both the initial stylistic nucleus and the chronological developmental sequence. Given the traditional names outlined above in the section on the traditional history of Tibetan painting, this starting point can only be the Shar mthun bris school. By following the developmental trends, influences, cross-cultural contacts, and religious developments, regional continua may be established, and by observing the disruptions (e.g., the stylistic changes introduced by sMan and mKhyen into the mature Sa skya Bal bris style), it is indeed possible to sort out the complex stylistic schools of Tibetan art.

## REGIONALISM

Six major geographic, or regional, stylistic complexes appear to be identifiable for the period of concern to this catalogue.<sup>53</sup> They are 1) dBus (pronounced Ü) and 2) gTsang (pronounced Tsang) in the Tibetan heartland, 3) Gu ge (pronounced Gugay) and 4) Ladakh in the west, and 5) Khams (pronounced Kom) and 6) North China in the east (fig. 39). This is not to say that only works of a particular stylistic grouping are found in a given region. Rather, it must be understood from the outset that both the artists and the works themselves travelled throughout the length and breadth of the Tibetan cultural sphere. For instance, I have seen Khams paintings of the Kar ma sGa bris school in traditional settings in both Ladakh and Beijing and works of the distinctive Beijing/Chengde school of the eighteenth century (not discussed in this catalogue) in Ladakh. However, local artists, living in or near the monasteries of a region, would produce a given style, and such styles are what predominated in that region. It is this predominance upon which I am basing regional determinations.

The earliest phases of the introduction of Pāla styles into Tibet was clearly a pan-Tibetan phenomenon (because Atīśa went first to Gu ge and then to gTsang and dBus), but the political situation of the time, with Tibet divided into thirteen principalities, clearly fostered regionalism. The problem is that only hints of these developments are available for study. The styles of Gu ge and Ladakh in the west are fairly well known. The gTsang styles were in fact among the earliest recognized by modern scholarship, having been termed the “composite school” by Tucci as early as 1949 in his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*. The North China school is well documented by works published in Japanese and a few in English that publish the material in both Chengde and Beijing,<sup>54</sup> and there is even a more specialized monograph addressing aspects of the problem in Heather Karmay’s *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*. Although not published in a highly visible way, the later schools of Khams and dBus are also well known among art historians,

and an excellent definition of Kar ma sGa bris was published in 1967.<sup>55</sup> The styles of early dBus and Khams are more problematic. No body of evidence or cluster of paintings or metal images is known to have been undeniably from either of these areas or to provide more than a hint of what was happening there prior to about 1500. No Early Shar mthun bris paintings may be attributed to these two regions. Lacunae notwithstanding, the geographic regions

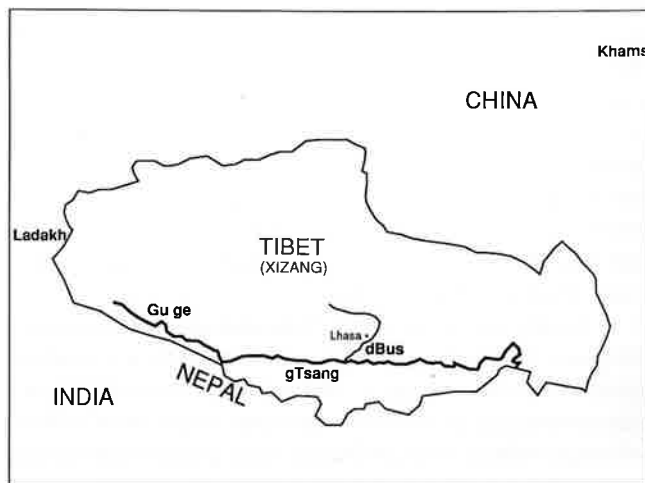


Figure 39. Map of major artistic regions of Tibet.

of Tibet provide a basis for understanding the development of style and present discrete stylistic subgroups whose study—ideally in monographic form—perhaps represents the most pressing need of the discipline.

The usual scholarly focus on iconography and religious methodology, which in a sense transcends contingencies of style and regional development, has overshadowed the study of stylistic development and regionality. Yet when the tools of stylistic progression and regionality are judiciously applied they can provide a firm basis for a much fuller understanding of iconography and religious methodologies. Ideally, if all the necessary information were available (which is unlikely ever to happen), it would be possible to specify what practices were taking place at a given time on a regional basis and even at specific monasteries. Some advances in this direction will be presented herein.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STYLES OF EARLY TIBETAN PAINTING

(See also chart of Styles of Tibetan Painting at back of catalogue.)

In their enthusiastic importation of Buddhism during the Second Propagation, the Tibetans considered eastern India, especially Magadha, to be the primary source of all things



Buddhist, including artistic images, iconography, and painting styles. However, the Tibetan term "Shar mthun" (pronounced Shardun), literally, "East agreeing [-with] style," or, more grammatically, "Style agreeing [with the] east[ern Indian school]," only refers to eastern India as a generic whole without reference to geographic or stylistic subdivisions. This parallels the Newari practice of treating all eastern Indic regions as a unitary whole, the "Doya."<sup>56</sup> Neither the Nepalis nor the Tibetans made any geographic distinctions among regions like ancient Magadha and Vaṅga, although these regions were centers of vital, stylistically distinct schools of artistic production. Thus, it is in a general, but very emphatic, way that the Tibetans viewed these schools as the "home" or "core" schools of Buddhist art. It is to these Pāla schools that both the Newari artists, consciously emulating the schools in the service of Tibetan patrons, and the Tibetans themselves self-consciously turned for inspiration in their search for authoritative visual prototypes.

For all media, traditional Tibetan nomenclature lacks the precision of definition that is necessary for modern technical stylistic analysis. Accordingly, I have chosen to add subcategories to the traditional terms Shar mthun bris/sku. "Early," "Transitional," and "Late" Shar mthun are just what their names imply. Early Shar mthun refers to the "pure" Pāla school as practiced in the century or so after its introduction, Transitional Shar mthun has progressed toward becoming another form of stylistic expression, and Late Shar mthun is the culmination of Shar mthun in the Tibetan sphere. However, the artists themselves had no doubt that they were following the Shar mthun style as perfectly as their ability allowed.

The late eleventh- and twelfth-century Tibetan attitude toward the Pāla schools was that of a new convert desiring to understand the content of the newly acquired religion and to illustrate the religious teachings with appropriate, "true," images. As illustrated by the quote from Gega Lama cited at the beginning of this introduction, the "true" image continues to be equated with the "Eastern [Indic]" style. During the Second Propagation, the Tibetan adherents of the New (gSar ma) Schools of Buddhism were taught practices involving spiritual beings that were vastly more numerous and quite different from those that had been introduced during the First Propagation. However, even the followers of the Ancient School, who soon were to become known as the rNying ma pas (i.e., "followers of the Ancient School," who trace their lineage to the First Propagation and to Padmasambhava), had their own iconographic repertoire and lineages, but were quick to adopt the new styles, apparently without reservation (see cat. no. 105). All later schools, which were, by contrast, known as the gSar ma, or New Schools, traced their teaching lineages to Atiśa or other Second Propagation teachers and would of course be expected to use the

methodologies of their respective teachers and in general to inherit the style of image-making followed by the teacher. This raises the question of just what the earliest art might have looked like and even if there was early art.

#### WHAT WAS THE PRE-SHAR MTHUN BRIS/SKU ART?

In the history of Tibetan art, a very curious phenomenon occurs, namely, suddenly virtually everything is done in the Shar mthun style. Except for the early Second Propagation Kashmiri style art in Western Tibet (Mar yul), i.e., the Ladakh and Zangskar regions, the art before this abrupt change was a hodgepodge of often crude stone carving, imported images, copies of famous images, and a few isolated fragments of mixed styles. There is nothing stylistically cohesive or discernibly unifying about the surviving remains. Then, with an apparent burst of energy, matched in its suddenness only by the adoption of Chinese culture by the Japanese in the seventh and eighth centuries, Pāla style images began to appear everywhere. There were no apparent pockets of resistance or revivalist movements. There are so few survivals of pre-Second Propagation art (and almost all of them are only speculatively dated) that it has led some to question if there was any Tibetan art during that period, although literary evidence makes it clear that temples had been built and that artists painted them or made images for them. However, by the twelfth century there simply was no more non-Pāla style art.

It is possible that we may never know the exact nature of the apparent initial artistic hegemony enjoyed by the gSar ma artistic schools or how it actually came about. It is clear that their artistic domination was not accompanied by domination in the intellectual or doctrinal spheres. The rNying ma pas retained their teaching lineages and practices, but rendered them in the new style of painting. It is possible that the gSar ma Schools' Shar mthun bris artists were all that were available. Unfortunately, the earliest extant rNying ma paintings already reflect the Shar mthun bris style, making it impossible to trace the process by which the style was adopted. These paintings date from ca. 1065-1085, about twenty to thirty years after the introduction of the gSar ma tradition. This raises two questions. Was there a pre-Second Propagation style of Tibetan Buddhist art? And is there any direct evidence of it?

Both questions can be answered in the affirmative. Traces in other Early Shar mthun bris paintings of deities not found in the newly imported iconographies reveal a glimpse of what may have occurred in pre-Second Propagation school art. In the Shar mthun bris painting of Vairocana in the collection of the Museum of Anthropology

at the University of Michigan (cat. no. 109), there are four Lokapālas, guardian figures that are sometimes called the Caturmahārāja (Four Great Kings) in Buddhist literature. The figures are rendered in an archaic Tibetan manner strongly reflecting Tang dynasty (618-907) Chinese prototypes. The Lokapālas appear because of the iconographic necessity or desirability of including them in the painting, but since no new stylistic conventions for them had arrived from the Indic sphere, old or pre-gSar ma conventions were used.<sup>57</sup> Thus, one aspect of the pre-Shar mthun school was a heavily Tibetanized version of Tang figure painting.

A second aspect of pre-Second Propagation art may be seen in the Ladakh and mNga ris regions. At the beginning of the Second Propagation, influence from Kashmir was intense in the western Tibetan kingdom of Gu ge, the regions of Ladakh and Zangskar, and along the lower gLangs po che' kha 'bab (pronounced Lanpochay kabab, i.e., the Sutlej River) after it enters what is presently Spiti District in India. This influence also extended briefly into the Tibetan heartlands, especially gTsang and to a lesser degree dBus. Except for modest stylistic conventions, the effect of Kashmiri influence was far more dramatically felt in the technology of metal casting than in painting. The Kashmiri school had entered the western regions under the patronage of the first great proselytizer of the Second Propagation, Rinchen bzang po. He had studied Buddhism in Kashmir during the course of three trips there from his native Tibet and had returned each time with artists to portray the *maṇḍalas* and deities whose iconography, meditation, and rituals he was to teach.<sup>58</sup> The style of Kashmiri painting, with its virtually rococo decorative quality, lavish use of gold, impasto-like techniques, and preference for the most vibrant colors available, stands in sharp contrast to the understated, graceful elegance of the Pāla school. Yet it is from that "pre-Shar mthun bris school" that many of the subtle elements of decoration and elaboration seen in the Tibetan interpretation of the Pāla idiom derive.

THE EARLY SHAR MTHUN BRIS/SKU SCHOOL(S)  
 Paintings (bris) (cat. nos. 105-109)  
 Sculpture (sku) (cat. nos. 127-131, 133-142, 150)

(NOTE: The following sections introduce the stylistic designations I have developed for early Tibetan art. Fuller and more specific definitions of the styles are given in the entries. Objects in each style are listed at the beginning of each section for the convenience of the reader.)

Shar mthun bris, as it took form in Tibet, was painting that was as close to Pāla-style painting as it was possible to produce at the time and under the circumstances. The problem for the connoisseur is how to determine which

elements are truly Pāla in derivation and which might have been added to the Pāla idiom from other sources. Fortunately, from the period spanning the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries there are extant manuscripts or isolated leaves representing about 280 Pāla manuscripts and about seventy Nepali manuscripts in collections throughout the world. These are widely dispersed in farflung collections, and reassembling them photographically is a challenge that has not been undertaken. Even more difficult from a comparative point of view relative to Tibetan painting is the fact that, due to their long, narrow format, the manuscripts contain only tiny illustrations, usually about two or three inches in height and of varying width. Yet, because some manuscripts preserve a colophon stating when and where they were written, they provide a basis for comparison, although the evidence they provide is relatively limited. No large-scale Pāla paintings are known except for the Sarai Mound paintings at Nālandā. Unfortunately these are in a ruinous state and even at their best were not the carefully crafted, crystalline gems of painting we find in the Pāla manuscript miniatures or in the best of the Kashmiri school as seen at Alchi. The Sarai Mound paintings appear to be little more than enlarged miniatures in composition and detailing, yet they are done in such a loose, sketchy manner that one wonders if they were low-budget paintings executed in a short period of time. In this respect the miniatures actually provide a better basis for comparison with Tibetan painting than the Pāla wall paintings, because Tibetan painting is usually elaborately detailed, with its masterpieces rivaling the most intricate productions of the Persian, Mughal, and Northern Renaissance schools.

The Early Shar mthun bris paintings, in addition to their primary criteria of being morphologically extremely close to Pāla conventions, exhibit three distinctive characteristics: muted coloration, comparatively simple compositions with limited numbers of figures and ancillary elements, and unevenness in line and drawing quality. Fortunately the earliness of this group is confirmed by a painting for which the donor/patron is known and identified in historical literature as active between 1065 and 1085 (see cat. no. 105), placing the painting within thirty years of Atiśa's activities. Thus it is possible to be certain of at least one stylistic subschool and to use that painting as the basis for comparison with other related paintings.

Wood and metal images of the Early Shar mthun sku style are so close to the Pāla tradition that there is difficulty in identifying them as Tibetan and ascertaining which elements are Tibetan and which are Indic. This is no small compliment to their Tibetan makers, whose primary goal was to produce perfect copies of the Indic images. The mastery of the artists notwithstanding, a careful examination by someone familiar with the several hundred excavated pieces in India and Bangladesh reveals patterns

Buddhist, including artistic images, iconography, and painting styles. However, the Tibetan term "Shar mthun" (pronounced Shardun), literally, "East agreeing [-with] style," or, more grammatically, "Style agreeing [with the] east[ern Indian school]," only refers to eastern India as a generic whole without reference to geographic or stylistic subdivisions. This parallels the Newari practice of treating all eastern Indic regions as a unitary whole, the "Doya."<sup>56</sup> Neither the Nepalis nor the Tibetans made any geographic distinctions among regions like ancient Magadha and Vaṅga, although these regions were centers of vital, stylistically distinct schools of artistic production. Thus, it is in a general, but very emphatic, way that the Tibetans viewed these schools as the "home" or "core" schools of Buddhist art. It is to these Pāla schools that both the Newari artists, consciously emulating the schools in the service of Tibetan patrons, and the Tibetans themselves self-consciously turned for inspiration in their search for authoritative visual prototypes.

For all media, traditional Tibetan nomenclature lacks the precision of definition that is necessary for modern technical stylistic analysis. Accordingly, I have chosen to add subcategories to the traditional terms Shar mthun bris/sku. "Early," "Transitional," and "Late" Shar mthun are just what their names imply. Early Shar mthun refers to the "pure" Pāla school as practiced in the century or so after its introduction, Transitional Shar mthun has progressed toward becoming another form of stylistic expression, and Late Shar mthun is the culmination of Shar mthun in the Tibetan sphere. However, the artists themselves had no doubt that they were following the Shar mthun style as perfectly as their ability allowed.

The late eleventh- and twelfth-century Tibetan attitude toward the Pāla schools was that of a new convert desiring to understand the content of the newly acquired religion and to illustrate the religious teachings with appropriate, "true," images. As illustrated by the quote from Gega Lama cited at the beginning of this introduction, the "true" image continues to be equated with the "Eastern [Indic]" style. During the Second Propagation, the Tibetan adherents of the New (gSar ma) Schools of Buddhism were taught practices involving spiritual beings that were vastly more numerous and quite different from those that had been introduced during the First Propagation. However, even the followers of the Ancient School, who soon were to become known as the rNying ma pas (i.e., "followers of the Ancient School," who trace their lineage to the First Propagation and to Padmasambhava), had their own iconographic repertoire and lineages, but were quick to adopt the new styles, apparently without reservation (see cat. no. 105). All later schools, which were, by contrast, known as the gSar ma, or New Schools, traced their teaching lineages to Aṭiśa or other Second Propagation teachers and would of course be expected to use the

methodologies of their respective teachers and in general to inherit the style of image-making followed by the teacher. This raises the question of just what the earliest art might have looked like and even if there was early art.

#### WHAT WAS THE PRE-SHAR MTHUN BRIS/SKU ART?

In the history of Tibetan art, a very curious phenomenon occurs, namely, suddenly virtually everything is done in the Shar mthun style. Except for the early Second Propagation Kashmiri style art in Western Tibet (Mar yul), i.e., the Ladakh and Zangskar regions, the art before this abrupt change was a hodgepodge of often crude stone carving, imported images, copies of famous images, and a few isolated fragments of mixed styles. There is nothing stylistically cohesive or discernibly unifying about the surviving remains. Then, with an apparent burst of energy, matched in its suddenness only by the adoption of Chinese culture by the Japanese in the seventh and eighth centuries, Pāla style images began to appear everywhere. There were no apparent pockets of resistance or revivalist movements. There are so few survivals of pre-Second Propagation art (and almost all of them are only speculatively dated) that it has led some to question if there was any Tibetan art during that period, although literary evidence makes it clear that temples had been built and that artists painted them or made images for them. However, by the twelfth century there simply was no more non-Pāla style art.

It is possible that we may never know the exact nature of the apparent initial artistic hegemony enjoyed by the gSar ma artistic schools or how it actually came about. It is clear that their artistic domination was not accompanied by domination in the intellectual or doctrinal spheres. The rNying ma pas retained their teaching lineages and practices, but rendered them in the new style of painting. It is possible that the gSar ma Schools' Shar mthun bris artists were all that were available. Unfortunately, the earliest extant rNying ma paintings already reflect the Shar mthun bris style, making it impossible to trace the process by which the style was adopted. These paintings date from ca. 1065-1085, about twenty to thirty years after the introduction of the gSar ma tradition. This raises two questions. Was there a pre-Second Propagation style of Tibetan Buddhist art? And is there any direct evidence of it?

Both questions can be answered in the affirmative. Traces in other Early Shar mthun bris paintings of deities not found in the newly imported iconographies reveal a glimpse of what may have occurred in pre-Second Propagation school art. In the Shar mthun bris painting of Vairocana in the collection of the Museum of Anthropology

at the University of Michigan (cat. no. 109), there are four Lokapālas, guardian figures that are sometimes called the Caturmahārāja (Four Great Kings) in Buddhist literature. The figures are rendered in an archaic Tibetan manner strongly reflecting Tang dynasty (618-907) Chinese prototypes. The Lokapālas appear because of the iconographic necessity or desirability of including them in the painting, but since no new stylistic conventions for them had arrived from the Indic sphere, old or pre-gSar ma conventions were used.<sup>57</sup> Thus, one aspect of the pre-Shar mthun school was a heavily Tibetanized version of Tang figure painting.

A second aspect of pre-Second Propagation art may be seen in the Ladakh and mNga ris regions. At the beginning of the Second Propagation, influence from Kashmir was intense in the western Tibetan kingdom of Gu ge, the regions of Ladakh and Zangskar, and along the lower gLangs po che' kha 'bab (pronounced Lanpochay kabab, i.e., the Sutlej River) after it enters what is presently Spiti District in India. This influence also extended briefly into the Tibetan heartlands, especially gTsang and to a lesser degree dBus. Except for modest stylistic conventions, the effect of Kashmiri influence was far more dramatically felt in the technology of metal casting than in painting. The Kashmiri school had entered the western regions under the patronage of the first great proselytizer of the Second Propagation, Rin chen bzang po. He had studied Buddhism in Kashmir during the course of three trips there from his native Tibet and had returned each time with artists to portray the *maṇḍalas* and deities whose iconography, meditation, and rituals he was to teach.<sup>58</sup> The style of Kashmiri painting, with its virtually rococo decorative quality, lavish use of gold, impasto-like techniques, and preference for the most vibrant colors available, stands in sharp contrast to the understated, graceful elegance of the Pāla school. Yet it is from that "pre-Shar mthun bris school" that many of the subtle elements of decoration and elaboration seen in the Tibetan interpretation of the Pāla idiom derive.

#### THE EARLY SHAR MTHUN BRIS/SKU SCHOOL(S)

Paintings (bris) (cat. nos. 105-109)

Sculpture (sku) (cat. nos. 127-131, 133-142, 150)

(NOTE: The following sections introduce the stylistic designations I have developed for early Tibetan art. Fuller and more specific definitions of the styles are given in the entries. Objects in each style are listed at the beginning of each section for the convenience of the reader.)

Shar mthun bris, as it took form in Tibet, was painting that was as close to Pāla-style painting as it was possible to produce at the time and under the circumstances. The problem for the connoisseur is how to determine which

elements are truly Pāla in derivation and which might have been added to the Pāla idiom from other sources. Fortunately, from the period spanning the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries there are extant manuscripts or isolated leaves representing about 280 Pāla manuscripts and about seventy Nepali manuscripts in collections throughout the world. These are widely dispersed in farflung collections, and reassembling them photographically is a challenge that has not been undertaken. Even more difficult from a comparative point of view relative to Tibetan painting is the fact that, due to their long, narrow format, the manuscripts contain only tiny illustrations, usually about two or three inches in height and of varying width. Yet, because some manuscripts preserve a colophon stating when and where they were written, they provide a basis for comparison, although the evidence they provide is relatively limited. No large-scale Pāla paintings are known except for the Sarai Mound paintings at Nālandā. Unfortunately these are in a ruinous state and even at their best were not the carefully crafted, crystalline gems of painting we find in the Pāla manuscript miniatures or in the best of the Kashmiri school as seen at Alchi. The Sarai Mound paintings appear to be little more than enlarged miniatures in composition and detailing, yet they are done in such a loose, sketchy manner that one wonders if they were low-budget paintings executed in a short period of time. In this respect the miniatures actually provide a better basis for comparison with Tibetan painting than the Pāla wall paintings, because Tibetan painting is usually elaborately detailed, with its masterpieces rivaling the most intricate productions of the Persian, Mughal, and Northern Renaissance schools.

The Early Shar mthun bris paintings, in addition to their primary criteria of being morphologically extremely close to Pāla conventions, exhibit three distinctive characteristics: muted coloration, comparatively simple compositions with limited numbers of figures and ancillary elements, and unevenness in line and drawing quality. Fortunately the earliness of this group is confirmed by a painting for which the donor/patron is known and identified in historical literature as active between 1065 and 1085 (see cat. no. 105), placing the painting within thirty years of Atiśa's activities. Thus it is possible to be certain of at least one stylistic subschool and to use that painting as the basis for comparison with other related paintings.

Wood and metal images of the Early Shar mthun sku style are so close to the Pāla tradition that there is difficulty in identifying them as Tibetan and ascertaining which elements are Tibetan and which are Indic. This is no small compliment to their Tibetan makers, whose primary goal was to produce perfect copies of the Indic images. The mastery of the artists notwithstanding, a careful examination by someone familiar with the several hundred excavated pieces in India and Bangladesh reveals patterns



of variation that promptly identify the Tibetan versions. Regrettably this process requires direct, hands-on examination of the sculptures by someone familiar in detail with casting techniques as well as style. It simply cannot be done from photographs.

As in the case of painting, discernible patterns of evolution and regional divergences emerge in the sculptural tradition. However, unlike painting, meaningfully dated Tibetan metal images have yet to come to light. Much like Mi la ras pa's stone houses that he built and rebuilt for his guru Mar pa, the stylistic sequencing of metal images would have to be torn down and built anew when the discovery of a dated image altered the shape of the foundation on which the chronology is built.

#### THE TRANSITIONAL SHAR MTHUN BRIS/SKU SCHOOL(S)

Paintings (bris) (cat. nos. 110-113)

Sculpture (sku) (143-153)

What makes Transitional Shar mthun bris style transitional is the appearance of elements that do not occur in Pāla painting. Their appearance is neither uniform nor consistent. In fact, a widely diverse group of paintings comprises this group. One finds random traces of Kashmiri and Nepali elements and the emergence of the trends that inaugurated a growing artistic independence from Indic traditions. What is remarkable about this phase of Tibetan painting is its diversity and richness of expression. It reflects an age of experimentation and growth within a framework of vigorous conservatism. Moreover, it develops concurrently with the beginnings of the Tibetan Bal bris (Nepali) school as a separate stylistic phenomenon. Mutual stylistic influences circulated freely for nearly a century and promoted vigorous, dynamic growth in the painting schools of Tibet.

One of the salient characteristics of the paintings of this transitional period is a change in the use of color. The Shar mthun bris artists began to use dramatically more vibrant colors in *thang ka* paintings than the early Shar mthun bris artists had used. The use of more brilliant hues came about for a number of reasons, most notably the nature of the current stylistic influences, changes in patterns of patronage, and political developments in the region. In terms of stylistic influence, the Ka che bris (Kashmiri) and Pāla ("Shar bris") source schools are known through their surviving paintings to have used a bright palette for some paintings while using duller earth tones for others. Sometimes the entire spectrum is present in a single building complex, such as Alchi, where the coloration ranges from the brilliantly vivid murals on the walls of the lower floor of the gSum brtsegs to the almost

monochromatic murals on the walls of the 'Du khang. In the case of the paintings of Sarai Mound, Nālandā, the paintings are much more muted than the richly colored illustrations in the Nālandā manuscripts. This disparity probably reflects economic considerations. The bright colors, which had to be imported from great distances, cost vastly more than the locally produced earth tones. Therefore, although bright colors did not predominate, they were one choice in the range of stylistic options available to Tibetan artists during this period.

In addition to the bright palette seen in some of the stylistic sources, another influential factor may have been a change in the clientele that was influencing the artistic choices. The monks who travelled to and from India during the eleventh century were essentially religious specialists who presumably were more concerned with the nuances of soteriological methodologies and philosophical details of the Dharma than the refinements of sumptuous paintings. One finds it hard to imagine that a mid-eleventh-century hermit, having renounced the material world, would demand that an artist use exotic, expensive colors imported from Afghanistan on a painting he was commissioning for his meditations. However, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Buddhism established a solid base of support in Tibet among the great clans and nobility, and multiple sources of patronage began to flourish. The lay patrons made aesthetic decisions that shaped artistic production, most conspicuously in a direction that afforded opportunities to display their wealth. The desire for ostentation was often combined with the conviction that the use of costly, rare, or precious materials brought greater religious merit to the patron. Aesthetic considerations presumably also were present. A patron who had seen the shimmering, crystalline beauty of establishments like the Alchi gSum brtsegs and others<sup>59</sup> might demand that paintings he was commissioning would be similarly lavish and brilliant.

Political circumstances also affected the change in coloration of Tibetan paintings. New trade routes opened up, mostly to the north and west, allowing freer movement of materials into the Tibetan plateau. The Islamic consolidation of western Central Asia under the Ghaznavids in Afghanistan and a branch of the Seljuks in Khwarezm, who formed an alliance that endured for much of the twelfth century, brought sufficient peace to the area to allow easier—but never easy—movement of goods along the Central Asian trade routes. Lapis lazuli from Afghanistan and coral from the Red Sea found their way into the heart of Inner Asia.<sup>60</sup> In addition, the Muslim conquests of eastern India may have influenced artistic developments in Tibet and other areas. The result of the conquest was the disruption of Buddhist culture in eastern India and hence the disappearance of current Pāla artistic resources. Nepali artists, with their consistently brighter

palette, became what the Indians had been to the Tibetans—the source of iconographically and artistically authoritative Buddhist paintings. Thus the events of approximately a century, beginning with the popularization of Buddhism in Tibet in about 1100 and ending with the Muslim conquest of eastern India in about 1200, introduced and fostered the widespread use of bright color in Tibetan painting.

The brighter colors seem to have appeared with an apparent abruptness that may give a false sense of chronological sequence. The introduction of the brighter palette did not conform to a linear pattern of gradual increase. Rather, for about a century the more vivid, saturated colors seem to have been experimentally and selectively integrated but in no presently identifiable chronological sequence. The clarity of the pattern emerges when one looks at the periods before and following the transitional phase. No known painting either dated or attributable to before ca. 1100 used the brighter colors, while no mainstream, central Tibetan painting<sup>61</sup> that is dated or attributable to after 1200 used the muted earth tones of the early paintings. Thus, the twelfth century seems to be the watershed, with paintings of both types being produced.

Other events that took place in the twelfth century also profoundly affected the development of Tibetan painting. Painting became regionalized and to some degree sectarianized, and numerous influences from external sources appeared. Thus, the period witnessed the emergence of stylistic variety. Until a larger corpus of twelfth-century painting is known, it is probably unwise to attempt generalizations regarding the external influences. Rather, each painting should be analyzed closely in an attempt to ascertain its individual history until broader generalizations can be drawn.

Because the twelfth century is truly a transitional period, I have treated the paintings in the styles of the period as a separate category, which I have termed Transitional Shar mthun bris. There is no corresponding Tibetan term for this time between the first introduction of the “pure” Shar mthun bris school and the rise of stable, indigenous Tibetan and Tibetan-supported Nepali schools.

#### LATE SHAR MTHUN BRIS/SKU SCHOOL(S)

Paintings (bris) (cat. nos. 114-115)

Sculpture (sku) (cat. nos. 154-155)

The Late Shar mthun designation is intended to convey the sense of being at the end, both stylistically and chronologically, of the Shar mthun stylistic spectrum. In these works usually the image is predominantly Shar mthun, but for any one of a variety of reasons the image will have departed from the basic style enough for the

divergence to be completely obvious. While this is a subjective approach, it proves meaningful for designating several conservative works. Chronologically, this continuation seems to occur long after the introduction of Bal bris/sku and the establishment of the Tibetan Bal bris/sku style.

#### EARLY TIBETAN BAL BRIS/SKU SCHOOL(S)

Paintings (bris) (cat. no. 116)

Sculpture (sku) (none identified; none in show)

Since the situation of Nepali craftsmen in the employ of Tibetans is not well understood, a brief outline follows. After the Muslim conquest of eastern India, direct influence from the Pāla regions was no longer possible. The Nepalis, who had a longstanding patron-artist relationship with the Tibetans, were seen by the Tibetans as the natural successors to the artists of Pāla India. To accommodate this expectation the Nepalis adopted many Pāla stylistic characteristics in their work, and during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Pāla-dependent styles of Tibetan art were largely the work of either Nepali artists or their Tibetan disciples working in a style best known as Early Tibetan Bal school, literally, “Tibetan Nepali” school.”

The existence of an internalized school of Nepali style of painting (Tibetan Bal bris) is to be expected in Tibetan art. Indeed, there is literary evidence that this symbiotic relationship between Nepali artists and their Tibetan patrons had existed since the time when the first Dharma King, Srong brtsan sgam po built the “She-demoness subduing temples” across the Tibetan countryside in the second quarter of the seventh century. At least one of these temples is known to have been decorated by an artist from Nepal. While this relationship is undocumented between the era of the Dharma Kings and the Second Propagation, it either continued or, at the very least, was not forgotten. By the thirteenth century when it was necessary to find artists for a major building project, eighty craftsmen were recruited from Nepal to do much of the work. For whatever reason, Tibetans maintained an ongoing patron-artist relationship with the Nepali community.

Metal images underwent changes from the Nepali influences as well, but these were incorporated into the Shar mthun sku and what I have called the Transitional Shar mthun sku school and represent a less distinct stylistic departure from the Shar mthun sku than that of the painting schools.

#### THE TIBETAN BAL BRIS/SKU SCHOOL(S)

Paintings (bris) (cat. nos. 117-121)

Sculpture (sku) in a related school (cat. nos. 132 and 158)

The exact beginning of the Tibetan Bal bris school and the adoption of the school as the in-house style of the Sa skya (and later Ngor) and related monasteries is uncertain. Because of the geographical proximity of gTsang to Nepal and the consistency of trade through Nepal with India, it is probable that there had been a longstanding relationship, as discussed above.

What is most interesting about the twelfth- through sixteenth-century phenomenon of Nepali artists working in Tibet is that the indigenous Nepali style was partially subordinated to the Tibetan Shar mthun idiom when the Nepali painters and paintings are identified in the Tibetan context. The Nepali artists attempted to continue to copy the true Pāla style (in actuality, an internalized Tibetan Shar mthun style); however, elements from the indigenous style slowly emerged as part of the tradition. To identify this school and distinguish it from the Nepali painting for Nepali clients, I have used the term Tibetan Bal bris, or Tibetan Nepali style. The style could equally well be called the Sa skya Bal school, especially when a work is made for the major patrons of the style, the Sa skya pa.

As interesting and important as the phenomenon of Nepali artists working in the Tibetan Bal style is, it must be understood that the vast majority of the artists involved were native Tibetans trained in the Bal (Nepali) manner. The style seems to have been integrated into Tibetan visual vocabularies at a relatively early date—the thirteenth century at the latest—and to have been centered at but not limited to gTsang District.

That Nepali artists worked in a different style and depicted different iconographies than they learned at home is documented by a relatively large number of surviving sketchbooks in which the artists record for future reference and demonstrate their mastery of various motifs and details (see cat. no. 93). Sometimes the sketchbooks functioned as practice tablets. For instance, in a dated sketchbook of 1435, the artist Jivarāma drew and redrew the facial features of Arhats and lineage masters in an apparent attempt to perfect his skill at executing them, perhaps under the watchful eye of his instructor.<sup>62</sup>

To demonstrate this difference between the Nepali school proper and the Tibetan Bal bris school, the exhibition and catalogue include a detailed comparison between two apparently similar paintings of Cakrasaṃvara (cat. nos. 92 and 117), wherein the differences and direction of Tibetan Bal bris may be observed closely. The Tibetan version of Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 117) documents the early internalization of the Bal (Nepali) school into a discrete Tibetan stylistic synthesis. It must be remembered that Tibetan Bal bris is essentially a post-Pāla convention, although both stylistically and iconographically rooted in the Magadhan schools.

The Bal style became the Sa skya style for all type of works. The continued influence was undoubtedly due to

the sustained pressure for more and more Sa skya works during the prosperous period of Mongol patronage in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. It is documented that in the 1260s Kubilai Khan ordered 'Phags pa to erect a golden *stūpa* (Tib. *chos rten*) and that at least eighty Nepali artists were imported to work on it. Nepali decorative elements in the backgrounds and treatments of certain jewelry elements became the de facto standard of the school, and by the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century a wholly internalized Tibetan Bal bris/sku school had come into existence and were concretized to the extent that by the fifteenth century departures from the style were considered worthy of note. The style became so entrenched that the probably quite subtle departures and innovations of sMan and mKhyen gave rise to completely new styles of Tibetan painting.

#### THE LATE SHAR MTHUN AND SINO-TIBETAN BAL BRIS/SKU IN CHINA

Paintings (bris) (cat. nos. 125-126)

Sculpture (sku) (cat. nos. 156-157, and 164)

In contrast to the histories of Nepali and Tibetan art, where influence from Pāla India occurred over a broad span of time and was extremely diffuse, the introduction of Pāla-dependent schools into China was for the most part a discrete and well-documented phenomenon. Some Pāla influence may be traced in China as a result of the ongoing contacts between China and India,<sup>63</sup> but the most visible and longlasting effect of Pāla influence resulted from the adoption of Tibetan Buddhist methodologies and in particular the Sa skya versions of Tibetan practices at the Mongol court. This adoption resulted from the personal interest of the Mongol prince Godan, who was to become Kubilai Khan at the time of Möngkä's death in 1259 (see Appendix III, Chart 15). In 1239 Godan had attacked the eastern Tibetan regions and had thrown the loosely knit Tibetan hegemonies into great turmoil. In 1244 Sa skya *paṇḍita*, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182-1251), went as an emissary to the court of Prince Godan. At that time he took with him a recognized prodigy, his nephew the Chos rgyal 'Phags pa, at that time a youth of nineteen. It is reported in the Tibetan biography of 'Phags pa that Godan was captivated by the youth's brilliance and learning, yet it would seem that little was accomplished by the first meeting. Shortly after the death of the Sa skya *paṇḍita* at Godan's court in 1251, another two-year campaign was mounted against the eastern Tibetans, which accomplished the return of 'Phags pa to Godan's camp in 1253, after which all hostilities ceased.

The real turning point seems to have been the 1258 debate between 'Phags pa and some court Daoists. 'Phags pa prevailed and the Daoists were forced to receive

Buddhist tonsure, symbolic of their physical, if not mental, conversion to Buddhism. It would seem that at this point the Tibetan Buddhists, and the Chos rgyal 'Phags pa in particular, attained the position of religious dominance in the court of the man who would soon rule both the Mongol Empire and ultimately all of China. In 1260, when Prince Godan became Kubilai Khan, ruler of all the Mongols, 'Phags pa was made suzerain of all of Tibet, and the Tibetan period of Sa skya rule began. By 1265 'Phags pa had accumulated so much wealth through offerings that he returned to Tibet and began a massive building program that permanently affected Tibetan art for all time.

In 1269 'Phags pa was invited to return to Mongol-controlled China, and he took with him another prodigy, the Nepali artist Anige (A-ni-k'o; 1245-1306), who had come to his attention during the great building surge in the Tibetan heartland (See Appendix III, Chart 16). Anige had been among eighty artists commissioned to work on a golden *stūpa* that Kubilai had ordered 'Phags pa to have built in Tibet. With Anige's introduction at the Mongol court in 1269, he was entrusted with a number of tasks, including the building of the Bai ta (Pai t'a), which still stands in Beijing. Anige quickly rose to prominence and soon thereafter was promoted to minister in charge of craftsmen for the Mongol court. After his death in 1306 the office continued to function, and even in the eighteenth century his presence in China continued to be noted in iconometric treatises.<sup>64</sup>

It is not likely that Anige transmitted the Nepali style *per se* to China. Actually, as discussed above, the Nepali artists were working at the behest of their Tibetan patrons and creating objects in the "true" style as envisioned by the Tibetans. The school Anige transmitted was thus probably a nascent form of the Sa skya Bal bris/sku school.

Tibetan Buddhist influence continued at the Mongol court with a series of Sa skya successors to 'Phags pa, who each held the title of Dishī (Tī Shih), Imperial Teacher. However, during the later part of the Yuan the major court interest shifted from the Sa skya to the bKa' brgyud sect. The third Kar ma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (pronounced Rangjung dorjay; 1284-1339), visited the imperial court in 1333 and enthroned the new Mongol emperor of China. A longer stay at court from 1360 to 1364 by the fourth Kar ma pa, Rol pa'i rdo rje (pronounced Rolpay dorjay; 1340-1383), consolidated the position of the bKa' brgyud hierarchs as *gurus* to the Chinese court.

The style of the period starts out as strictly Sa skya Bal bris/sku, but within a very short time Chinese craftsmen working under Anige began to reconfigure and add discretionary elements. Such composites as a silver image of Śaḍaḥṣarī Avalokiteśvara (cat. no. 156) exemplify the melding of the two idioms into a new, yet distinctly Pāla-based idiom that was to dominate the Chinese Tibetan Buddhist production for the next three hundred years.

Works of the Yuan are legendary in Tibet for their aesthetic perfection and quality of craftsmanship. The surviving pieces demonstrate that this reputation is richly deserved.

#### THE SMAN AND MKHYEN BRIS SCHOOLS

Paintings (bris) (cat. nos. 122-123)

Sculpture (sku) (no sculptures produced by this school)

No document or other direct evidence illustrates the features that can identify early paintings of either the sMan bris or mKhyen bris schools.<sup>65</sup> sMan bris was named after sMan bla don grub (pronounced Menla dōndub; ca. 1409 or 1440-?). Even the most well-educated and knowledgeable Tibetan informants, when asked to identify examples of the schools, indiscriminately will point out virtually any Tibetan Bal bris painting or Sa skya Bal bris painting.<sup>66</sup> Minor identifying characteristics of the school, such as the Chinese clouds seen in a painting of Hevajra (cat. no. 118) or the Kharamukha Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 121), are not observed and thereby ignored by these informants. However, from the brief narrative of sMan's contribution, it would seem that his alteration of the accepted Bal bris style was a major departure from the norm. From the even briefer description of the contribution of mKhyen (named after mKhyen brtse, pronounced Kyen rsay), active in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries) it would seem that he followed the direction of sMan in adding Chinese elements but also went further. Accordingly, I would suggest that the changes for which these schools are noted must have been equally dramatic as the differences between Early Shar mthun bris (see cat. no. 105) and Early Bal bris (see cat. no. 116). In short, the overall appearance of the paintings did change.

Accordingly, the two paintings that I tentatively attribute to the "original sMan bris" and "original mKhyen bris" schools are obviously different because of identifiably Chinese elements in the compositions, especially the overall coloration of the backgrounds, which lends a conspicuously Chinese atmosphere to the surroundings of the deity and teacher. However, these attributions represent working hypotheses rather than established fact. Moreover, this is not to suggest that either of these paintings is actually by the founder of the respective school. On the contrary, this is probably not the case. The changes instituted by sMan, the original innovator of what might be called the rGya nag bris, or "Chinese painting," movement, may have been relatively subtle and may have consisted of such details as the clouds in the background of the painting of Hevajra (cat. no. 118). However, once the door was opened to the incorporation of Chinese elements, followers must have continued the



process and shaped what came to be the character of the schools, with the Chinese treatments of the landscape and other secondary elements of the compositions.

## SINO-TIBETAN SCHOOLS OF THE MING DYNASTY

Painting (bris) (none in exhibition)

Sculpture (sku) (cat. nos. 159-160)

An historical overview of Buddhism during the Ming Dynasty has yet to be written; however, it was a period of general prosperity for the Buddhists.<sup>67</sup> The first Ming emperor, Hongwu (Hung-wu; reigned 1368-1398; see Appendix III, Chart 17), had been raised as a Buddhist monk and clearly favored the religion in general. However, he made a concerted effort to revive traditional Buddhist sects and to downplay the influence of Tibetan Buddhism, which had been so prominent under the Mongols. However, Tibetan Buddhism had established itself as a major religious, cultural, and historical force in China during the Yuan dynasty and was not to be dismissed so easily. Several of Hongwu's successors favored the Tibetan methodologies. Visits by the Kar ma pas of the bKa' brgyud sect had begun while China was still under Mongol rule. Their visits continued into the Ming with the visit of the fifth Kar ma pa, De bzhin gshegs pa (pronounced Dayzin shaygpa; 1384-1415), to the court of the Yongle (Yung-lo; 1403-1424) Emperor, where he was proclaimed the *guru* to the emperor. This not only documents the ongoing tradition carried over from the Yuan, but is also symptomatic of the entire Ming imperial relationship with Tibetan Buddhist teachings and hierarchs, especially those of the bKa' brgyud sect. Most traditional and contemporary historians of China have ignored the ongoing post-Yuan relationship between Tibet and imperial China. At least a few of the emperors of Ming China, especially the Yongle, Chenghua (Ch'eng-hua; reigned 1465-1487), and Wanli (Wan-li; reigned 1573-1620) emperors, had deep relations with Tibetan *bla mas* (*gurus*, i.e., teachers) and invited many, including the two Kar ma pas, to China. The Chenghua Emperor allowed the ordination of over five hundred thousand monks during his reign.

It was a particularly prosperous time for the arts of Tibetan Buddhism and a period when many elements of Chinese style were introduced into the schools of Tibetan art. Metal image production attained new heights, as attested by an image of Virūpa (cat. no. 160) and one of a Bodhisattva (cat. no. 159) from the period. Magnificent gifts of opulent and exquisite images like these were made through the court offices to local temples and to visitors to take back to their monasteries in Tibet.

Both painted and sculpted images continue to follow the Tibetan iconometric conventions. However, there is an ongoing process of synthesis of Chinese Buddhist

sculptural schools and the Tibetan Buddhist styles into a distinctive North China school of both painting and sculpture. Many minor and discretionary details from the Chinese visual vocabulary are added and the style, profoundly impressive in its refined ornateness and exquisite craftsmanship, provides an impetus to Tibetan painting and sculpture that affects virtually all schools of Tibetan art.

## THE KAR MA SGA BRIS SCHOOL

Paintings (bris) (cat. no. 124)

Sculpture (sku) (no sculpture produced in this school)

Kar ma sGa bris (pronounced Karmagadree), the painting tradition of much of eastern Tibet and especially Khams in general, was founded by Nam mkha' bkra shis (pronounced Namka tashi; 1500-?), a Yar lung pa of whom Gega Lama gives the following account of his training:

Nam mkha' bkra shis studied with dKon mchog phan bde, who was himself considered to be an emanation of the Chinese princess Kongjo; from dKon mchog phan bde, he learned the strict proportions as laid down by the Sharli (the "eastern casting method") of India. He was also instructed by the fifth Sharmapa hierarch dKon mchog yan lag (1525-1583), and the fourth rGyal tshab Rin po che Gags pa don grub (1550-1617) to paint in a distinctive style. This style was to be based upon numerous examples: the Chinese scroll-painting offered to the fifth Karmapa hierarch De bzhin gshegs pa (1384-1415) by the Ming emperor Yung lo of China; the masks drawn by a crowd of artisans witness to the miracle when Rang 'byung rdo rje, the third Karmapa hierarch (1284-1339) showed his face in the full moon to the emperor . . . and a Chinese *thang ka* or scroll painting called "Yerwa Rawama" depicting the sixteen arhats of early Buddhist tradition. Furthermore, they [his teachers] directed, this style was to incorporate elements from three countries: the forms to be in accordance with the Indian standards, the colouring and textures to be by the Chinese method, and the composition to be by the Tibetan manner.<sup>68</sup>

This passage explains in detail how the Tibetan followers of the school perceived their training and the origins of their school. While the exhibition includes only one painting from this school, it demonstrates the kind of self-conscious composite that Gega Lama describes. Gega Lama also explains that the style is called sGa, or "Camp," bris because it was the style used in the travelling entourage of the early Kar ma pa hierarchs. Thus Kar ma sGa bris is literally the "style of the camp of the Kar ma pa."

Through an unknown process this became known and associated with sGa District in Khams<sup>69</sup> and at some point became an important and highly admired style in much of Tibet. In more recent times it was centered at Kar shod in Khams and is traditionally believed to be the style in which most Khams and Amdo artists worked.<sup>70</sup> The study of this exquisite school is a fitting topic for a separate monograph, and the example in the exhibition is simply to illustrate the ongoing Pāla dependency, both real and conceptual, in later Tibetan schools.

#### SINO-TIBETAN STYLE AND THE CHINESE PĀLA REVIVAL SCHOOLS OF THE QING (CH'ING) DYNASTY

Painting (bris) (painting apparently did not undergo a Pāla revival in Qing China)  
Sculpture (sku) (cat. nos. 161-163; Sino-Tibetan style, cat. no. 165)

The Qing (Ch'ing) relationship with the Tibetan church followed much the same pattern established by the Yuan and Ming, with the additional factor of the relationship of the dGe lugs pas with the Mongols. During the fifteenth century, while the Kar ma bKa' brgyud sect enjoyed the patronage of the Ming court, a new sect, the dGe lugs (pronounced Gayluk), had emerged in Tibet. During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries endless and complex machinations took place in the struggle for power as the Manchus sought control over Tibetan territory and attempted to wrest the greater Central Asian regions from the hands of the Mongols. In 1653 the fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag dbang, visited the imperial court<sup>71</sup> to lay the groundwork for the conversion of China, Mongolia, and Tibet to the dGe lugs methodologies.<sup>72</sup> The Manchu court continued its practice of lavish patronage and established a tradition of ongoing temple construction. In the summer capitol at Chengde the palace was surrounded by twelve large Tibetan Buddhist establishments, and several temples were established in Beijing. While some may argue that the court was primarily interested in political domination of Tibet through a nominal patronage of the dGe lugs pas, there is relatively strong evidence that Qianlong (Chienlung, reigned 1736-1795; see Appendix III, Chart 18) and perhaps other emperors as well were motivated by sincere religious interests and cultural considerations, rather than purely political concerns.

In sculpture, the two styles that developed in northern China during this period were a stiff and almost mechanical style seeking to reproduce contemporaneous works being done in central Tibet and a remarkably accurate Pāla revival style, demonstrating that the craftsmen preserved a detailed knowledge of the earlier traditions.

Painting of the period is not included in the catalogue,

but continued to contain essentially Tibetan iconometric images of the sMan bris gSar ma school set against a background or landscape done in the manner of the Chinese professional, or Blue-green, school.

#### TIBETAN SECTARIANISM AND ARTISTIC STYLES

(Note: For a general overview of the development of Tibetan Buddhist schools see Chart of Tibetan Sectarianism, fig. 40.)

The Shar mthun bris school of painting and its successors transcended sectarian boundaries in even the earliest known paintings of the school. While it is obvious that the appearance of Atiśa and the artisans that travelled in his entourage greatly influenced the art of Tibet, many other Indian monks came to Tibet and many Tibetans visited the Pāla domains of India. The following brief survey of Tibetan Buddhist sectarian history is intended to demonstrate the ties of each of the major sectarian movements in Tibetan Buddhism to eastern India and to the various artistic schools that accompanied the teachings to Tibet. It must be remembered that there were many unaffiliated monasteries founded along lineage patterns. In other words, a monastery would be founded in which the teaching followed the method of one teacher, one type of *tantra*, or some particular set of *tantras* according to a specific set of lineage instructions (*sādhana*s). David Snellgrove lumps these independent gSar ma monasteries together and labels them as bKa' gdams monasteries,<sup>73</sup> but the bKa' gdams pas were a specific group following the teachings of 'Brom ston—no less specific than the early Sa skyas sect or the various bKa' brgyud subsects. Accordingly, these lineage centers, or unaffiliated gSar ma monasteries, are part of the trend of sectarianization that was taking place in Tibet at this time. Any one of these monasteries might have developed into the center of a great sect, and it was in reality the strength and charisma of the teachers and the political savvy of their patrons and disciples that ultimately determined which monasteries grew and became permanent centers and which did not.

#### THE RNYING MA (ANCIENT) SCHOOL

The lineages of the rNying ma school are not linked to specific institutions but are connected solely with specific teachings. During the First Propagation there was no rNying ma school, but rather a loosely knit affiliation of teachers who followed certain practices and sent disciples back and forth among themselves as best met the needs of the disciples. It was not until after the gSar ma schools emerged that the rNying ma pas began to identify themselves and to use the term rNying ma pas (Ancient

# Chart of Tibetan Sectarianism

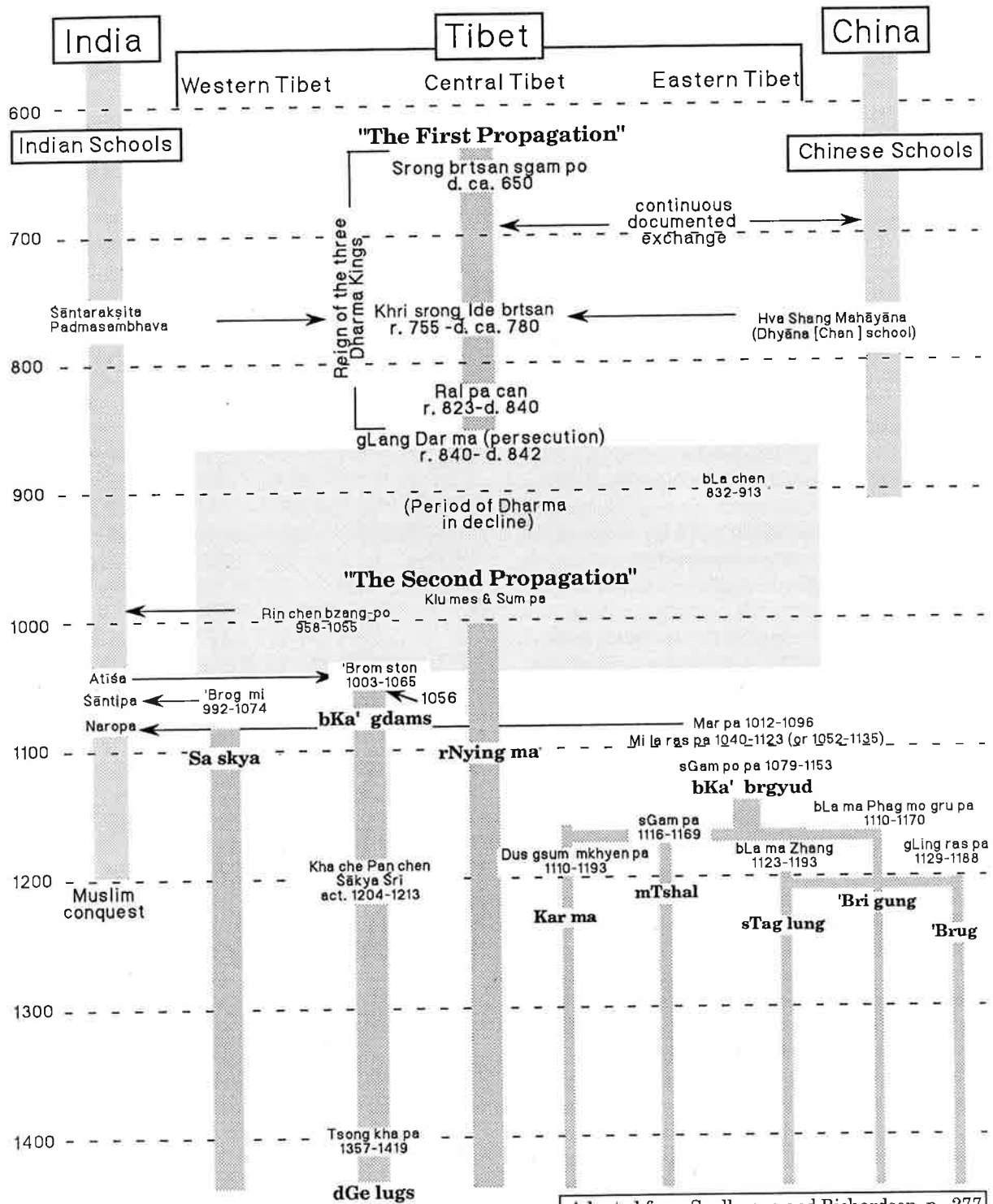


Figure 40. Chart of Tibetan Sectarianism.

Ones) to distinguish themselves from the followers of the new sects. Accordingly, a determination of a rNying ma lineage must be made on the basis of the teachings transmitted by the lineage, as I have done for a painting of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 105). (For one of the main rNying ma lineages, see Appendix III, Chart 19.)<sup>74</sup>

## GSAR MA (NEW) SCHOOLS

### bKa' gdams (pronounced Kadam)

The earliest school to be differentiated from the originally established school of Tibetan Buddhism (which, as discussed immediately above, was to become known as the rNying ma sect) was the bKa' gdams. As the earliest of the Second Propagation schools to emerge, the bKa' gdams sect claims two sources as the basis of its teachings. One is the great Tibetan translator (Tib. *lo tsa ba*) Rin chen bzang po and the other is the eastern Indian *paṇḍita* Atīśa, who came to Tibet in 1042, converted Rin chen bzang po in 1054, and later died at sNye thang in 1054. The bKa' gdams sect was founded by 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas (1003-1065), one of Atīśa's most important disciples, with the building of Rwa sgrens (pronounced Rateng) in 1056. The sect emphasized the *yoga tantras* that focus on Sarvavid Vairocana (see cat. no. 106). This was the beginning of the "monastic movement" in Tibetan Buddhism and represented a transition from the wandering yogi and eremitic tradition that had prevailed in central Tibet. In this school it is necessary to distinguish between the earlier and later teachings of Rin chen bzang po, who was active in the Mar yul/Gu ge region and whose influence extended into Ladakh and Zangskar. Several surviving early temples there, notably at Tsa pa rang, mTho gling, Mang nang, Ta pho, Alchi, and Sumdah, all contain paintings of the pre-Atīśa teachings of Rin chen bzang po. These paintings have been labelled as bKa' gdams by some authors,<sup>75</sup> but it must be recognized that there were several historical developments prior to any legitimate or formally recognized bKa' gdams sect, namely, the conversion of Rin chen bzang po, the death of Atīśa, and the founding of Rwa sgrens by 'Brom ston. The early teachings of Rin chen bzang po could perhaps be considered as proto-bKa' gdams teachings. Since the Tibetan tradition has failed to distinguish the brief florescence of the *yoga tantras* in the western Himalayan regions with a formal name, perhaps they simply should be called, in the traditional manner, the "teachings of Rin chen bzang po."

Other important bKa' gdams teachers and founders are the "three brothers" Po to pa Rin chen gsal (died 1105), known for the founding of Po to monastery; Phu chung pa gZhon nu rgyal mtshan (1031-1100); and sPyan snga tshul khrims 'bar, who founded the monastery of Lo in 1095.<sup>76</sup>

Blo gros grags pa (dates unknown), who founded sNar thang monastery, is another important bKa' gdams pa. (For the bKa' gdams lineage, see Appendix III, Chart 20.)

An artistically significant subschool of the bKa' gdams sect is the Zhwa lu (pronounced Zhalu), named for the monastery founded by lCe btsun Shes rab 'byung gnas (dates uncertain) in 1040. This monastery was the repository of the texts studied by Bu ston Rin chen grub pa (1290-1364).

### Sa skya

The Sa skya (pronounced Sakya) sect is named for the location of the principal monastery, which was founded at Saskya in 1073 by 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po (pronounced Kön Könchog gyelpo; 1034-1102). He was a descendent of a major noble clan that traced its lineage back to 'Khon dPal bo che (pronounced Kön Palpochay), minister of Khri srong lde brtsan (pronounced Tisong Daytsen; ca. 718-780), and to his brother 'Khon Nāgarakṣita, who was one of the close disciples of Padmasambhava (active mid-eighth century). According to tradition there were ten generations of rNying ma practitioners between the eighth-century scions of the line and the 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po, who founded Sa skya. The former tantrics had followed the rNying ma teachings of Vajraheruka (Tib. dPal yang dag) and Vajrakīlaya (Tib. rDo rje phur pa) as introduced by Padmasambhava, while 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po was a student of the gSar ma tradition, or New Schools introduced by Atīśa and taught by his disciple 'Brog mi. 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po founded a monastery in the Nyu gu Valley in 1043. His teachings on the "path and fruit" (Tib. *lam 'bras*) provided the philosophical and practical foundation.

The Sa skya leadership is hereditary and is passed from father to son, so the successor to 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po was his son Kun dga' snying po (1092-1158). His studies were primarily concerned with the Heruka deity Hevajra (see cat. no. 118), and he is one of the "five greats" (Sa chen gong ma lnga) of Sa skya intellectual history. (For the lineage of the early Sa skya hierarchs, see Appendix III, Chart 21).

This lineage of the Sa skya hierarchs is frequently depicted on paintings as the lineage of the teachings leading to the practice for which the painting was executed. An important branch of the Sa skya school was centered at Ngor at the Ngor E vam chos ldan monastery founded in 1429 by the great Sa skya scholar Kun dga' bzang po (1382-1444).

### bKa' brgyud

The bKa' brgyud (pronounced Kagyü) schools trace their lineages to the Indian Mahāsiddhas Nāropa (956-1040 or



1016-1100) and his teacher Tilopa (988-1069) through a Tibetan saint who visited India and studied with Nāropa, Chos kyi blo gros of Mar, better known as Mar pa the Translator (*lo tsa ba*; 1012-1096). Mar pa received the Hevajra, Guhyasamāja, and Cakrasaṃvara initiations and teachings from Nāropa and also received the teachings of *mahāmudrā* from him. His second major teacher was Maitrīpa (dates unknown), with whom he studied the *vajra*-songs (*dohās*) and the teachings of *mahāmudrā*. Mar pa received two major lineages, the direct lineage (Tib. *nye brgyud*) arising from Vajradhara and transmitted through Tilopa and Nāropa (including the four teachings of Tilopa and the Six Yogas of Nāropa), and the indirect lineage (Tib. *ring brgyud*), which also originated with Vajradhara but passed through Ratnamati, Saraha, Nāgārjuna, Śavaripa (see cat. no. 112) and Maitrīpa. The teachings emphasized the *dohā* poetic tradition of expressing one's attainments and the *mahāmudrā* tradition according to the Cakrasaṃvara methodology. Mar pa also studied with the Mahāsiddha Kukkuripa (dates unknown), who taught him the Guhyasamāja system of meditation.

Mar pa founded a "monastery"<sup>77</sup> in the Lho brag area, where he lived with his wife and four sons. The lineage passed from Mar pa to Mi la ras pa (1040-1123 or 1052-1135), who composed an extensive body of mystical poetry in the genre of the *Dohākośas* of Saraha. Mi la ras pa lived with Mar pa and later as a reclusive hermit. Late in his life he began to accept disciples and among them two, Ras chung rdo rje grags pa (pronounced Raychung dorjay trakpa, better known as Raschung pa; 1084-1161) and sGam po pa (pronounced Gampopa; 1079-1153), were the most influential. Ras chung pa travelled to India to seek teachers and a cure for leprosy. sGam po pa is the author of the first great compendium of Vajrayāna soteriology<sup>78</sup> and is considered the founder of the bKa' brgyud lineages. sGam po pa had been educated as a young man in the bKa' gdams doctrines; at thirty-two he went to study with Mi la ras pa and received from him the doctrines of Nāropa and the teachings of *mahāmudrā*. After several years of meditation he founded a monastery in Dvags po in 1121 and began to teach his own disciples. The bKa' brgyud pas credit him with combining the doctrines of the bKa' gdam school with those of *mahāmudrā*, thus forming the basis of the bKa' brgyud teachings.

sGam po pa's four major disciples are the founders of their own lineages or subsects within the bKa' brgyud tradition. Dus gsum mkhyen pa (pronounced Dusum kyenpa; 1110-1193) from Khams in eastern Tibet founded the Khams tsang bKa' brgyud and the lineage that became known as the Kar ma pa *bla mas*. Renowned for his mastery of many teachings, he had learned the rituals of Cakrasaṃvara according to the methods of Atiśa, the doctrines of Maitreya, the Prajñāmula teachings, the bKa'

gdams doctrines, including the Kālacakra tantric system and their *lam rim* system, and the *tantras* of Hevajra taught to him by sGam po pa. After a prolonged period of meditation, he realized complete enlightenment and was instructed by sGam po pa to teach others. He founded the mKhan po gnas tshang monastery in 1165, the Khams mar<sup>79</sup> monastery in 1184, and later (ca. 1184-1185) the Kar ma dgon, which became the largest and most important of the bKa' brgyud monasteries. Shortly thereafter (about 1185), he founded the mTshur phu monastery (about fifty miles west of Lhasa), which became the principal seat of the Kar ma pa incarnations.

Phag mo gru pa (1110-1170) had trained at Sa skya and received initiations from Sa skya Kun dga' snying pa (pronounced Sakya kunga nyingpo; 1092-1158), the second head of the Sa skya monastery. Late in his life Phag mo gru pa met sGam po pa and received teachings on *mahāmudrā*. At the end of his life in 1158, he founded the first great bKa' brgyud monastery of gDan sa mthil. Through his disciples, his lineage gave rise to no less than eight subdivisions. The three most prominent disciples are: 1) 'Jig rten gsum mgon (pronounced Jigten sumgön; 1143-1212), from Khams, who founded the 'Bri gung monastery in 1179 and whose followers are known as the 'Bri gung pas and consider themselves the direct successors of Phag mo gru pa; 2) gLing ras pa pad ma rdo rje (pronounced Lingraypa padma dorjay; 1128-1188), who founded the Rwa lung<sup>80</sup> monastery in about 1180 and established the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud subschool that now predominates in Bhutan; and 3) sTag lung bkra shis dpal (pronounced Taklung tashipal; 1142-1210), who began to study with Phag mo gru pa at the age of twenty-six, built the sTag lung (pronounced Taklung) monastery, and founded the sTag lung bKa' brgyud subschool.

The Kar ma pas are considered to wear a mystical black crown that was given to the first Kar ma pa by Ḍākinīs who had woven it from their hair and offered it as a sign of the attainments of the Kar ma pa. The fifth Kar ma pa, De bzhin gshegs pa (1384-1415), received the physical counterpart of the Ḍākinī's immaterial gift from the Yongle Emperor of China (see cat. no. 115). Images of Kar ma pas made prior to that time portray them with a significantly different type of crown, a fact that sometimes assists in the dating of a work (see cat. no. 125).

#### THE PROBLEM OF SECTARIAN DESIGNATIONS FOR PAINTINGS

The process of the rise of sectarianism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was an intensely dynamic and complex one, and the various strands of teachings were deeply interrelated through the multiplicity of teachers that any given seeker might have. Thus, with minor exceptions, no

sect had a strictly exclusive claim to any one methodology. However, one sect might emphasize a particular *tantra* (e.g., the Sa skya pas emphasize Hevajra; see cat. no. 118), and images of the deities and *maṇḍala*(s) of that *tantra* would be emphasized in the art of that sect and would be found much less often, or in a subsidiary position, in the paintings of another sect.

From a chronological standpoint, it is obvious that if we can identify an eleventh-century painting, it cannot be assigned to the rNying ma or bKa' gdams sects by virtue of its date alone. Virtually all of the major sectarian movements, except for the dGe lugs, arose before there are any surviving paintings. With the rNying ma sect already in existence, the bKa' gdams sect founded in the mid-eleventh century, the Sa skya sect founded in 1073 with the founding of Sa skya monastery, and the bKa' brgyud sect founded by the early twelfth century, only the bKa' brgyud sect arose too late to be considered for the earliest surviving paintings. Thus, all but a handful of Shar mthun bris paintings must be considered as potentially belonging to any sect. Of the early paintings in the exhibition whose sectarian affiliations have been identified, the earliest are a rNying ma painting of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 105) and a bKa' gdams painting of Vairocana (cat. no. 106).

1. Gega Lama, *Principles of Tibetan Art: Illustrations and explanations of Buddhist Iconography and iconometry according to the Karma Gardri School*, 2 vols. (Darjeeling: Jamyang Singe, 1983), vol. 1, 47.
2. See also John C. Huntington, *Styles and Stylistic Sources of Tibetan Painting* (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1969) and others, especially Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya: Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), that intuitively have headed in this direction. However, other studies of Tibetan art have not progressed beyond a rudimentary level of stylistic discussion.
3. Two notable exceptions are the Koelz collection in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, published by Carolyn Copeland in *Tankas from the Koelz Collection*, Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia 18 (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1980), and the paintings collected by Berthold Laufer at the Field Museum in Chicago (unpublished but well documented in the museum). A third potentially useful collection was that made by Giuseppe Tucci; however, most of the paintings he collected have been dispersed, and records of their collection sites have not yet been published.
4. The Blue-Green school regrettably is not one of the popularly studied schools of Chinese painting. The Professional school, in the sense that the term is used here, refers to a kind of "interior decorator" school that provided murals and screens for palaces. The style is not well-documented and has never attracted the same scholarly attention as have the literati painters of the monochrome schools. The painters of the Professional school were basically journeymen artisans plying their trade, although this fact did not preclude occasional flights of genius and the creation of some true masterpieces.
5. Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting: Being an Account of the Hindu Paintings of Rajasthan and the Panjab Himalayas from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century Described in their Relation to Contemporary Thought with Texts and Translations* (1916; reprint, 2 vols. in 1, New York: Hacker, 1975).
6. Regarding Tibetan historiography, the study of history of the early period of Buddhist Tibet is greatly facilitated by the existence of three major Tibetan historical works. The first, *Tāranātha's 1608 rGya gar chos 'byung*, or "History of Buddhism in India," concentrates on India with a very slender section on the transmission of Buddhism to Tibet. However it is extremely useful for lineage histories and the general history of Buddhism, especially in eastern Indic regions up to the end of Buddhism there. See Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, trans., *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, ed. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (Simla: Indian Institute

- of Advanced Study, 1970). The second, Bu ston rin chen grub pa's *Chos 'byung*, or "History of Buddhism" (literally, "History of Dharma"), actually contains only a brief subsection on the actual developments in Tibet proper. See E. Obermiller, trans., *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung)* by Bu-ston. Part 1 *The Jewelry of Scripture*. Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismus, ed. M. Walleser (Heidelberg: Otto Harrassowitz, 1931), Part 2 *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (Heidelberg: Otto Harrassowitz, 1932); reprint, 2 vols. in 1, Suzuki Research Foundation, Reprint Series 5, n.p., n.d. For the subsection on the developments in Tibet proper, see vol. 2, 181-224. Because of his chronological proximity to the period of our concern, Bu-ston's work is of great importance to the study of Tibetan Buddhism from the eleventh through fourteenth centuries. The third source, popularly known as the "Blue Annals," or *Deb ther sngon po* (the full title is *Bod kyi yul du chos dang chos smra ba ji lta' byung ba'i rim pa deb ther sngon po*; The Blue Annals of the Appearance of the [Buddhist] Dharma and of Dharma Teachers in the Realm of Tibet) is by the 'Gos Lo tsa ba, gZhon nu dpal (1392-1481). See George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), vol. 2 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1953); reprint, 2 vols. in 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979). Writing between 1476 and 1478, 'Gos Lo tsa ba (literally, the "translator from 'Gos" [whose name was gZhon nu dpal]) provided a detailed list of the lineages of various teachings and of the relationships among masters and disciples from the introduction of Buddhism into Tibetan cultural areas up to his own time.
7. Loden Sherap Daggyab, *Tibetan Religious Art*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), 36-39; Gega Lama, *Principles of Tibetan Art*, vol. 1, 44-46.
  8. Giuseppe Tucci, trans., *Deb T'er dMar po gSar ma: Tibetan Chronicles by bSod nams grags pa*, vol. 1, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 24 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1971), 146-148. Transliteration altered to Wylie's system and my brackets throughout.
  9. See Erik Haarh, *The Yar-lun Dynasty: A study with particular regard to the contribution by myths and legends to the history of Ancient Tibet and the origin and nature of its kings* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad's Forlag, 1969), for a thorough study of this period and the relevant materials.
  10. There is no mention of India as a source of craftsmen, although one of Srong brtsan sgam po's ministers did travel to "south India" to obtain images of Avalokiteśvara there.
  11. L. Austine Waddell, *Lhasa and its Mysteries, with a record of the expedition of 1903-1904* (London: Methuen and Co., 1906), 375.
  12. Bu ston states that the king himself went there and built 108 temples. See Obermiller, *History of Buddhism*, vol. 2, 185.
  13. These temples included sKa tshal, Khra 'brug, gTsang 'gram, Grom pa rgyang, Kong po p'u chu, Lho brag khom mthing, sKa brag, Bra dum rtse, rLung gnod of Byang tshal, 'Dan klong thang sgron ma in Khams, Byams sprin in Mang yul, and Bum thang spa gro skyer chu in Mon yul.
  14. The authenticity of the marriage and the relationship between Tibet and the king mentioned as the father of the Nepali princess have been questioned by Tucci. See Giuseppe Tucci, "The Wives of Sron brtsan sgam po," *Oriens Extremus* 9 (1962): 121-130. Since he wrote that it has been discovered in the Nepali chronicles that Amśuvarman, who reigned at least from 602 to 621, was a very powerful king and was the founder of the first period of rule by the *thakuri* (chieftains) (602-1043). See Bikrama Jit Hasrat, *History of Nepal: As Told by Its Own and Contemporary Chroniclers* (Hoshiarpur, Punjab: V. V. Research Institute Press, 1970), xxx-xxxii. It would seem more than likely that the marriage to a Nepali princess, daughter of the most powerful king to the south known to the Tibetans, parallels exactly the 641 marriage to the Chinese princess, daughter of the most powerful king to the east. It might be argued that because of the slight discrepancy of dates between the two kings the marriage could not have taken place. Amśuvarman reigned from 602 or 605 to 616 or ca. 620, while Srong brtsan sgam po's dates are generally slightly later than that. His reign was ca. 629-650, but the date of his birth is unknown and the date of the marriage to the Chinese princess in 641, confirmed by the almost invariably accurate Chinese histories, is the only certain date in the whole melange. However, neither of the king's dates are totally certain, and it is completely possible that the Nepali princess could have been born late in her father's lifetime or even shortly after he died. Assuming a typical ascension age of between ten and twenty for Srong brtsan sgam po, he would have been born about 612 plus or minus five years and would have been exactly the right age for marriage negotiations to have taken place.
  15. Among the other early images noted in the Mani bka' 'bum and associated with the reign of Srong brtsan sgam po are those of the Jo bo mched bzhi, "The four brother lords," all images of Avalokiteśvara said to have been made from the trunk of a single sandalwood tree. According to Snellgrove these are the sKyid grong (or sKyirong) Jo bo, the Mar yul Jo bo (or Jo bo Dza ma li at Khur chags), the Lhasa Jo bo, and the one known as Bunga dyo or Karunāmāya (Nepali spelling) at the temple of Matsyendranāth in Patan in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal (originally from the Bungamati Jo bo at Bungamati village about 6 km. south of Patan). See David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, 2 vols. (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), vol. 2, 417-418 and John K. Locke,

- Karunamaya: The Cult of Avalokitesvara—Matsyendranath in the Valley of Nepal* (Kathmandu: Sahayogi Prakashan for the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, 1980), 243-244 and n. 1. Unfortunately, from a technical standpoint the record is confused, and the early Jo bo mche bzhi must have been Buddha images rather than figures of the Bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokitesvara. Until further early documentation is forthcoming, the connection of Srong brtsan sgam po with the Jo bo mche bzhi must remain nothing more than legend. Photographs of both the Lhasa Jo bo (which may be an eighteenth-century replacement) and the Bunga dyo reveal little of their original appearance. Both images have been refurbished and have received so many offerings of garments and ornaments from the faithful that what appears is a conglomeration of elements of mixed, mainly recent dates. It is doubtful that the vicissitudes of Asian history could have left any of these images intact. On the contrary, the tales of burial and relocation of the Lhasa Jo bo suggest that it has been "restored" several times.
16. Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India* 347-349; my brackets throughout.
  17. See Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India* 229-233.
  18. While I am always cautious about dismissing the works of early authors as erroneous, it seems that Tāranātha's Bhaṃgala may be a geographic confusion.
  19. See also S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 1-2 and Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 387-388.
  20. See note 6.
  21. Lokesh Chandra, ed., *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1970).
  22. See Introduction by E. Gene Smith in Lokesh Chandra, ed., *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1970).
  23. See note 7.
  24. See note 1.
  25. Primarily Nawang Gelek and the Domo Geshe Rinpoche, N. Jigme, in 1969 and 1970.
  26. Translation by E. Gene Smith. See Smith, "Introduction" to *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture*, 38, n. 69. Tibetan spellings altered to Wylie's system.
  27. Smith, "Introduction" to *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture*, 39.
  28. In theory, the figures of sMan bris gSar ma are still Pāla-dependent and are indeed considered to be completely accurate copies according to canonical iconometry. While this is not literally the case, it is still a widely held view.
  29. Byi'u is translatable both as "shrew" and as "sparrow," and both translations have been used, "shrew" by Smith (40 n. 70) and "bird" by Dagyal. I see no possibility of determining which was originally intended.
  30. Smith, "Introduction" to *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* 39-40.
  31. Several recent publications have shed considerable light on this little-known period. See Anonymous, *Ancient Tibet: Research Materials from the Yeshe De Project* (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1986); Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Jacques Bacot, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Tibet* (Paris: Société Asiatique, 1962); and Haahr, *The Yar-lun Dynasty*.
  32. Regarding the details of this council, see Paul Demiéville, *Le Concile de Lhasa: Une controverse sur le quietisme entre Bouddhistes de l'Inde et de la Chine au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle de l'ère Chrétienne* Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, vol. 7 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale de France, 1952).
  33. Interestingly, a few wooden pieces appear to have survived from the period, either as originals or as close and very early copies. The Cleveland Museum of Art recently has acquired a fragmentary wooden image of Ekadaśamukha Avalokiteśvara that falls into this category.
  34. Bu ston, *History of Buddhism* vol. 2, 200-201.
  35. Their full names are kLu mes shes rab tshul khrim and Sum pa ye shes blo gros.
  36. Apparently the persecutions were ineffective in Kham.
  37. Presumably immediately after his extraordinarily youthful ordination at thirteen. If this is the case, and if Rin chen bzang po had indeed mastered the requirements for full ordination, there can be no doubt that he was an extraordinary prodigy.
  38. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 68-69.
  39. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 69.
  40. A biography of him is informally translated by Sarat Chandra Das, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow* (1893; reprint, Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1965), 53-83.
  41. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 242-243.
  42. See list in Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 243-244.
  43. See Giuseppe Tucci, *Rin-chen-bzan-po and the Renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet Around the Millennium*. Indo-Tibetica, vol. 2. English translation, Śata-Pitaka series, vol. 348 (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988), 14-25.
  44. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 244-245.
  45. Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Their Contribution to Indian Culture* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962), 369.
  46. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 254-255.
  47. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 257. This image was still known at the time of 'Gos lo tsa ba's writing of the *Blue Annals*, i.e., 1476-1478. I have been unable to find references to it after that date. It is possible that this image, which is the only one of Atiśa mentioned as painted during his lifetime, was the prototype for the standard icon of him. See the Late Shar mthun bris painting of Vajradhara for the type (cat. no. 115).
  48. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 263.
  49. George Roerich, *Biography of Dharmasvāmin (Chag lo tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal): A Tibetan Monk Pilgrim*, Historical Research Series, vol. 2., ed. A. S. Altekar (Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1959), 93-94. The evidence seems to be that the Muslims had a particular interest in maltreatment of the Buddhists. See p. 98 in the same book as well.
  50. Apologists for the conquerors and Hindu supremacists both ignore the naively unbiased Tibetan documents and archaeological evidence.
  51. The "goal" may be either a conscious one, such as that of the Dadaist movement in Europe, or simply an unconscious impetus or sense of direction, such as the increasing elaboration in Kham metalworking of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
  52. Technological advances are singularly difficult to integrate. No one writing before the fact would have predicted the effect of aniline dyes on Japanese prints, of the chainsaw on Northwest Coast Ameri-Indian art, or of the printing press on European manuscript illumination.
  53. Because of the limitations imposed by the catalogue, there are stylistic issues and religio-political considerations that are not addressed in this scheme, although predominantly later ones. While the proposed scheme is generally applicable to all Tibetan painting, there are many possible refinements for the post-sixteenth centuries that are not particularly relevant in this context.
  54. Important discoveries by Terese Tse Bartholomew of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco soon will be forthcoming in an article she is preparing.
  55. Richard Bartholomew, "Tibetan Thangkas," *Times of India Annual* (1967): 29-38.
  56. Gautam Vajracharya, personal communication, November 1988.
  57. See entry for cat. no. 109 for details.
  58. Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 376, 378-384.
  59. However, the remote Alchi complex itself probably did not serve as a direct source. Other temples in the same Kashmiri style and early Pāla school temples that received similarly rich patronage probably led the way.
  60. It is remarkable that coral, conch, and cowry shells found their way so extensively into Tibetan cultural areas. For example, coral was used in much traditional Tibetan jewelry, and conch shells from the Bay of Bengal are widely used to the present day as personal ornaments by Ladakhi women. Cowries from the same source were widespread as clothing ornaments and as signs of wealth. The use of cowries in Tibet may have originated during the Pāla period, when the Tibetans became familiar with the widespread use of the cowry in India. For example, in the Bihar region a paṇa (literally a "handful" of cowries, or about eighty cowries) was the standard small unit of economic exchange.
  61. These observations do not hold true for outlying districts and for provincial paintings, such as those in 'Jang District (i.e., local Batang and Dali paintings), which, presumably because of trade problems, are frequently very muted or may have only one or two bright colors. Cinnabar red and orpiment yellow in particular are often lacking, and azurite blues are almost invariably substituted for the coveted lapis blue.
  62. John Lowry, "A Fifteenth Century Sketchbook (Preliminary Study)," *Essais sur l'Art du Tibet*, ed. Ariane Macdonald and Yoshiro Imaeda (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1977): 83-118.
  63. For example, via the sea and land routes through Southeast Asia. However, it is difficult to document Pāla influence in the surviving art of China from this source. For a recent attempt, see Angela F. Howard, "Buddhist Sculpture of Pujiang, Sichuan: A Mirror of the Direct Link Between Southwest China and India in High Tang," *Archives of Asian Art* 42 (1989): 49-61. Some Pāla influence also reached China via the overland routes from India's northwest through Central Asia. This is seen clearly in Cave 76 at Dunhuang, where the Pāla designs for the *aṣṭmahāprātihārya* have been painted in Chinese landscape settings on the eastern wall. See *Chūgoku Sekkutsu: Tonkō Bokō Kutsu*, 5 vols. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1980-1982), vol. 5, pls. 106-109.
  64. Heather Karmay, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1975), 23.
  65. As opposed to sMan bris gSar ma, the "new school of sMan," founded by Chos dbyings rgya mtsho (1645-?), which became the artistic lingua franca of the dGe lugs pa. Regrettably the sMan bris painting that Dagyal illustrates is actually sMan bris gSar ma and does not illustrate the style of sMan himself, as Dagyal implies. Dagyal, *Tibetan Religious Art*, vol. 1, 37,

and vol. 2, pl. 20.

66. This brings out an anomaly in the study of Tibetan painting that may be intractable. Although the Tibetan literature speaks of Bal bris as the style of Sa skya and of sMan as a master of Bal bris who introduced Chinese elements into the school, modern informed Tibetan scholars do not usually make any distinction between Tibetan Bal bris and sMan bris.
67. Albert Chan, *The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1982), 108-124, provides a useful introduction.
68. Gega Lama, *Principles of Tibetan Art*, 46-47. Wylie transliterations used.
69. Whether this is mere coincidence, a case of "the camp naming the district," or some sort of error, I do not know, but paintings in the style are widespread in Khams, and villages in the area are known to have been centers where the style was executed.
70. Smith, "Introduction" to *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* 46.
71. A detailed account of this visit, including documents by both the emperor and the Dalai Lama, is available in English in Zahiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 40 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), 163-183.
72. Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 183.
73. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* vol. 2, 507-508.
74. For other lineages in the rNying ma tradition, see Eva M. Dargyay, *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), 12-61.
75. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* vol. 2, 485.
76. Giuseppe Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet*, trans. Geoffrey Samuel (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1980), 35; Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 73.
77. The descriptions make it sound far more like a traditional family domicile than any kind of monastery.
78. The *Dam chos yid'bzhin gyi nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i lam rim gyi bshad pa*, by sGam po pa. See Herbert V. Guenther, trans., *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (London: Rider and Co., 1959).
79. Written as pronounced, Tibetan orthography uncertain.
80. Written as pronounced, Tibetan orthography uncertain.



# CATALOGUE OF TIBETAN AND SINO-TIBETAN OBJECTS

105

VAJRASATTVA AND VAJRADHĀTVĪŚVARĪ (TIB. RDO RJE SEMS DPA' AND RDO RJE DBYINGS KYI DBANG PHYUG MA; pronounced Dorjay sempa and Dorjay yingyi wongchukma)

Tibet, Early Shar mthun bris

Ca. 1065-1085

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 23 3/4" W: 14"

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon (68.8.115)

Illustrated in color

Uniquely among carefully studied works of early Tibetan art, this painting can be dated securely. The key to the date resides in the identification of the lineage of preceptors across the top of the painting and the patron of the painting in the lower right corner. Fortunately these, and the other figures in the painting, are all identified by inscription,<sup>1</sup> so there can be no doubt regarding who is portrayed by the highly idealized miniature portraits. When these inscriptions were originally published by Tucci in his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*,<sup>2</sup> the renowned authority apparently misread several of the difficult *dbus med* (style "without heads") inscriptions and thus was unable to ascertain the identities or significance of the lineage of masters and patron portrayed. Identified as the patron because of his position in the lower right-hand corner, literally at the feet of the deity, the patron can be identified as gLan Śākya byang chub (pronounced Lan Shākya jangchub), a rNying ma practitioner who was active in the period from about 1065 to about 1085. This gives a specific and unusually early date for the painting, but one that is virtually irrefutable. That its date is so early, ca. 1065-ca. 1085, is quite remarkable, because until recently it was generally the opinion of scholars working on Tibetan painting that eleventh-century paintings might exist but that such an early date could never be proven.

In order to understand this important painting fully it is necessary to understand the lineage of the rNying ma *mahāyoga* tradition depicted across the top and the position of the patron of the painting relative to that lineage.

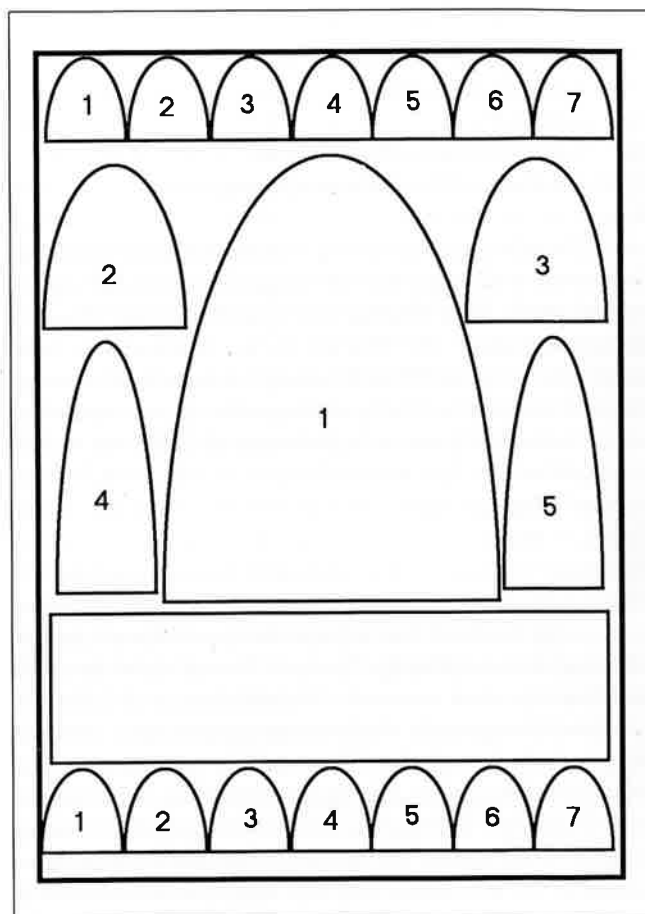


Figure 41. Diagram of cat. no. 105.

Identification of figures by readings<sup>3</sup> of the inscriptions (for locations, see fig. 41):

Top register:

1. 'Bhi ma la (=Vimalamitra)

2. Lo tsa ba Rin chen mchog

3. Gye re mchog skyong

4. Rin chen gzhon nu<sup>4</sup>

5. rGyal ba yon tan

6. sNubs sangs rgyas ye shes<sup>5</sup>

7. Nya □ □ mchog<sup>6</sup>

(Nya[ng Shes rab] mchog)<sup>7</sup>

Middle register:

1. rDo rje sems dpa' [the identification of his consort, Vajradhātviśvarī, is implicit]
2. Lha bu bzang po
3. [Lha □ ] bzang po
4. Lha'i bu □ □
5. Lha ma yon gyi bu □ □

Bottom register:

1. rDo rje gzhon nu
2. rDo rje rnam 'joms
3. rDo rje □ □<sup>8</sup>
4. mKha' 'gro mchod yon ma<sup>9</sup>
5. mGon po lcags pa
6. Ri ma ti
7. bLa ma Śākya byang chub  
(=[gLan] bLa ma Śākya byang chub)

The lineage across the top of the painting is that of the rNying ma *mahāyoga* system called sGyu 'phrul gSang ba snying po.<sup>10</sup> This rNying ma rgyud (Ancient Tantra) lineage includes: [1] 'Bhi ma la, or Vimalamitra, who taught the *lo tsa ba* [2] rMa Rin chen mchog, who translated the root *tantra*, the *Guhyamūlagarbha-tantra*, and who taught both [3] Gye re mchog skyong and [4] Tsug ru Rin chen gzhon nu. Rin chen gzhon nu taught both Dar rje dpal gyi grags pa and [5] Zhang rGyal ba'i yon tan. After Zhang it became known as the bKa' chims phu ba, or "Lineage of precepts." Dar rje preached in gTsang District, dBus District, and Khams; these regional teachings soon became the basis of two schools that were known as the dBus and Khams schools. To reach the teacher in the sixth position we must return to Vimalamitra and follow a collateral lineage to [6] sNubs sangs rgyas ye shes. As with the previous lineage, it begins with [1] Vimalamitra, but then goes through [a] gNyags Jñānakumāra, who taught both [b] Sog po dpal gyi ye shes and [c] [6] sNubs sangs rgyas ye shes zhabs. At this point, the sequence become less clear. For example, the direct connection to the seventh *ācārya* in the lineage is obscure, since he is traditionally given as the third successor to sNubs sangs rgyas ye shes. sNubs sangs rgyas ye shes is credited with having five major disciples, four to whom he taught only part of the teachings and a fifth, known as the best, to whom he taught a summary of the whole teaching. These are 1) Ye shes dbang phyug, 2) Pa gor blong chen 'phags pa, 3) [Lha] Yon tan mchog, 4) Gru legs pa'i sgron ma, and finally 5) [the "best"] Yon tan rgya mtsho.<sup>11</sup>

The usual *mahāyoga* lineage goes through Yon tan rgya mtsho and his disciple Nyang ye shes 'byung gnas to the "Two Zur," the elder and younger, or the great and lesser: Zur po che Śākya 'byung gnas and Zur chung shes rab grags pa. However, the two Zur seem also to have been direct disciples of sNubs sang rgyas ye shes, so the exact

chronology is difficult, if not impossible, to decipher. The placement of Nyang shes rab mchog in the lineage depicted in the painting suggests that he is intermediary before the two Zur.

It is possible to estimate the date of sNubs sang rgyas ye shes. Although it is precise about the length of his life, 113 years, the *Blue Annals* equivocates about when sNubs sangs rgyas ye shes lived. In one place it states that he lived during the period of "spread of general upheaval"<sup>12</sup> (i.e., after the time of Khri strong lde brtsan and his son—between 841 and 1050). Elsewhere it states that there are controversies regarding his lifetime<sup>13</sup> and that he lived at the time of Khri strong lde brtsan (mid-eighth century) or at the time of Ral pa can (815-840) or at the time Khri bkra shis brtsegs pa dpal (who ruled gTsang in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries). In light of his doctrinal associations, only the later date seems plausible.

During his lifetime Sangs rgyas ye shes travelled to India, Nepal, and Bru zha (modern Gilgit) and had as one of his teachers the 'Bru zha Lo tsa ba, Che btsan skyes. He is noted for having mastered dGongs pa 'dus pa, one of the translators of which was his teacher the 'Bru zha Lo tsa ba. He is also known for having written the commentary on dGongs pa 'dus pa (in vol. 10 [tha] of the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*). Since Sangs rgyas ye shes was so prominent, it is likely that the information that two Zur were among his disciples is reliable.

The elder Zur, whose full name is Lha rje Zur po che Śākya 'byung gnas, was an important master who taught many disciples.<sup>14</sup> He insisted that a youth of the Zur family named Lha rje rGya bo pa be left with him to raise and train. The boy was given the name Shes rab grags pa and nicknamed Zur chung, "Little Zur." Zur chung (1014-1074)<sup>15</sup> continued Lha rje's work.<sup>16</sup> He practiced *rdzogs chen* and practiced *maṇḍala* visualization according to the *gSang ba sgyu 'phrul*,<sup>17</sup> the central text of the lineage, thus establishing the religious continuity of the lineage. Zur chung had many disciples, who were likened to the various structural parts of a temple. Śākya byang chub, the patron of the painting, was one of the "eight beams" of Zur chung's disciplic edifice.<sup>18</sup>

Most importantly, the two Zur are the direct links to the patron of the painting, [gLan] bLa ma Śākya byang chub. They are the direct successors to the *mahāyoga* lineage descended from Vimalamitra through sNubs sangs rgyas ye shes (and undoubtedly through Nyang shes rab mchog). The younger Zur was the direct master of [gLan] Śākya byang chub, and this establishes a direct link between the lineage and the patron.

While the *Blue Annals* gives no dates for Śākya byang chub, it specifically mentions Śākya byang chub as a direct disciple of Zur chung. Therefore, he was active during the ministry of Zur chung, and he would have had to have been his disciple for a significant length of time in

order to have become a recognized disciple. Since Zur chung would only have accepted disciples as a mature master and Śākya byang chub would have had to be old enough to receive the teachings, it is reasonable to estimate that Śākya byang chub could not have been born much later than ca. 1050, but probably earlier. Although gLan Śākya byang chub is a minor figure in the transmission of the Dharma, he is noted in the *Blue Annals* as a master of rDzogs-chen according to the method of sKor [Nirūpa].<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the *Blue Annals* reports that one of his disciples, sGro sbug pa, was born in 1074.<sup>20</sup> Since his disciple was born in 1074, one can be certain that Śākya byang chub lived for many years beyond that date, even into the early twelfth century. Regrettably, the average lifespan was short in Tibet, so assuming a long life goes against the grain of probability. However, the fact that his major disciple was born in the year that his teacher Zur chung died means that Śākya byang chub survived his teacher for a number of years. One can only speculate on a terminus, but sixty is an old age in traditional Tibet; therefore, it can be suggested that he may have lived from ca. 1050 to ca. 1110. Śākya byang chub has the title of *bla ma* (an honorific term meaning “guru”) in the inscription. Thus, it is likely that this painting was executed later in his career, presumably after Zur chung had died (in 1074).

In the monastic context,<sup>21</sup> a painting typically is made to aid the practice of visualization during the novitiate stage. More senior or expert meditators need not rely on such visual aids. Therefore, it is to be assumed that the painting was done during his days of discipleship under Zur chung or as a meditational device for offering the *maṇḍala* during his teaching career. On this basis, one can argue that the painting must have been made between ca. 1065 and 1110, with a strong probability that it was done earlier in that time frame rather than later. In view of all the foregoing evidence, one can confidently estimate that the painting dates from between ca. 1065 and 1085, or roughly 1075.

Pal has attributed all paintings in this and several related styles to the “bKa’ gdams pa school.”<sup>22</sup> However, the rNying-ma lineage of the *mahāyoga* system called sGyu ‘phrul gsang ba snying po, which is portrayed on the painting, demonstrates that it undeniably comes out of the rNying ma sect. Moreover, Śākya byang chub’s teacher, Zur chung, was deeply embroiled in a controversy between the gSar ma (New School) teachers of Atiśa and his followers over the legitimacy of the rNying ma (Ancient School) teachings. The *Blue Annals* records that a New School teacher, Khyung po (early to mid-eleventh century) said that Zur chung had such wrong views and was leading people down such wrong paths that the merit of killing him would surely result in Buddhahood.<sup>23</sup> Thus, not only is the painting rNying ma by sectarian affiliation, but it was painted at about the time of the most potent controversy

between the Old and New schools. To identify this painting as bKa’ gdams, or even to use the term bKa’ gdams as a generic name as has become a standard practice, is not only blatantly wrong but does a disservice to the traditions that the paintings represent and to the paintings themselves as documents of the cultural history of Tibet.

Now that there is a painting with a verified date it can serve as a touchstone for stylistic and chronological analysis. Most significantly, the painting displays what may be considered the pure Shar mthun bris, that is, Pāla, style. The muted coloration of the painting is a distinctive characteristic of numbers of paintings of the Early Shar mthun bris school. These paintings strongly contrast to the vividly colored Pāla and Nepali manuscripts and manuscript covers of the same period. Indeed, vivid coloration is one of the hallmarks of both schools. In contrast, the one surviving example of Pāla school mural painting at Sarai Mound, Nālandā, suggests that wall painting was less vibrantly colored. I suspect that this was due to the cost of the pigments that had to be imported to India for the purpose. The Nepalis were closer to the western Himalayan sources of some of the colors and apparently placed a higher value on more vivid colors. While there is no documentation of the reason that early Tibetan painting is so muted, it is possible that until the paintings began to be made in some quantity there was not sufficient demand for the expensive colors and additionally that the trading patterns did not yet exist that would have brought an ample supply of bright yellows (orpiment), greens (malachite), and blues (lapis lazuli and azurite) to central Tibet. The systematic use of these bright pigments seems to coincide with the beginning of extensive contact with the Mongols (after 1260), because the brighter colors appear in Sa skya paintings from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century on. While I do not propose to suggest that all pre-fourteenth century paintings are painted in less vibrant colors or that all post-thirteenth century paintings are painted in the brighter coloration, I do believe that this principle provides a starting point for further analysis.

An important element of this painting that suggests a Pāla source is the position of the central figures of Vajrasattva and Vajradhātviśvarī, with the female seated atop the left leg of the male. The placement of the female on the left thigh of the male is typical of the Pāla treatment, whereas the Nepali tradition generally shows the female seated beside the male but not atop his leg. The posture with the female on the left thigh of her consort is widespread in the Bihar region, particularly in the iconography of Umā-Maheśvara. It is seen in a seventh-century, pre-Pāla image of Umā-Maheśvara in this exhibition (cat. no. 2). The same iconography is found in Nepal at an early date (cat. no. 96), but with the variation that Umā is seated to the proper left of Śiva’s leg and not actually on it. Thus, the

motif of the female consort on the leg is more a Pāla convention than a Nepali one.

A second feature that probably derives from a Pāla source is the alternating red and blue geometric shapes seen in the throne back, the ground under the son and daughter of the deities, and the structure of the lion base of the throne. The use of the colored geometric configurations to represent gems is widespread in Indic art since at least the fifth century, when they appear at Ajañtā. In a Buddha image on the right wall of the shrine of Cave 2 (fig. 42), both the throne back and the halo are painted with conventionalized geometric gems of exactly the same conception as those in this painting of Vajrasattva. Moreover, many Pāla sculptures, especially those of an enthroned Buddha (cat. no. 16), are enriched by gem motifs carved in a pattern virtually identical to this. These colored geometric patterns are uncommon (but not unknown) in Indian paintings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. However, their appearance in many Nepali manuscript illustrations of the period has led to a mistaken consensus that the colored geometric shapes are a Nepali invention.



Figure 42. Buddha. Cave 2. Ajañtā, India. Fifth century.

The key elements of the Pāla-based Early Shar mthun bris style are the very flat colors and virtually total lack of three-dimensionality; the very plain auras and halos; the degree of hierarchical scaling of the main figures in

relationship to the secondary figures; and the specific conventions of the jewelry types, headdresses of the main figures, lotus pedestals, and lion thrones. The arrangement of the two registers above and below the central composition is characteristically Tibetan. No known Pāla example survives in quite this form, but since major Pāla paintings are lacking it may never be known if such arrangements of preceptors above and protectors and often the patron below were part of the Pāla idiom. However, patrons, priests, or donors frequently were placed at the foot of the image in Pāla pieces (cat. no. 16), so at least this aspect of this format occurred in the Pāla prototypes.

The headdress exemplifies the Pāla derivation of the painting. A closely related Pāla version of the Meru headdress of Vajrasattva occurs on an image of Mañjuśrī Kumāra in the exhibition (cat. no. 25). The primary aspect of this headdress is not the crown but the triple knot of hair (*trimukūṭa*), which symbolizes Mount Meru as the center of the universe in Buddhist cosmology and also the axis of the yogi's body in tantric physiology. The triangular elements of the crown that is worn with this hair arrangement are gems that symbolize the five Buddhas of the Jina Buddha *maṇḍala*. When the crown has a second layer, as in the case of this Vajrasattva, the second layer explicitly refers to the female Buddhas who are paired with the male Buddhas in some versions of the *maṇḍala*. Ultimately, the crown symbolizes the practitioner's attainment of the five kinds of *jñāna*, or transcendental insights, and the whole headdress signifies the attainment of *bodhi* or enlightenment. Every detail of the headdress complex is iconographically significant and therefore not something with which the artist would have taken liberties in more than a minor way. The triangular elements of Mañjuśrī Kumāra's crown parallel those of Vajrasattva, and although his crown does not have the second layer (in which case the presence of the female Buddhas is implicit), the tiara, three knots of hair, ties at the sides, and even the emerging gem of enlightenment at the top of the headdress are virtually identical in both images.

Many other elements in the painting can also be traced to Pāla imagery, although the painted versions are usually more finely rendered and sometimes less massive in appearance. For example, Vajrasattva's armbands are virtually identical in basic shape to the same, but larger armbands of Mañjuśrī Kumāra. Given its relatively precise date, the relative purity of the Pāla elements, and yet its undoubtedly Tibetan origin, this painting stands as one of the major documents of early Tibetan painting.

In general, the rNying ma sect considers Vajrasattva to be a *vidyādhara*, "knowledge holder," or "knowledge bearer," who holds the knowledge of all the Buddhas. He transmits the *bka' ma*, or directly received and transmitted Buddha's teachings, which originated with the Ādi Buddha Samantabhadra (Tib. Kun tu bzang po)<sup>24</sup> and were spread



in all times and directions without exception. Vajrasattva thus stands as the intermediary between the *sambhogakāya* and human realm, and it is through him that all teachings pass to the human realm. Accordingly, the *mahāyoga* tradition emphasizes the *sādhana*s of Vajrasattva in which Vajrasattva is propitiated in order to obtain a vision of Vajrapāṇi, who then explains the *tantras* to the practitioners. The tradition of the visualization of Vajrasattva goes back to the Indian Mahāsiddha Kukkuripa (ca. ninth century), who summoned the vision in order to receive an explanation of the root *tantra* of *mahāyoga*, the *Guhyamūlagarbha-tantra*.<sup>25</sup>

An ancient prayer to Vajrasattva that is shared by all the sects is translatable as:

OM Vajrasattva, keep (your)pledge.  
Vajrasattva, reside (in me).  
Make me firm [in my resolve to attain  
Buddhahood].  
Make me satisfied [with my modest  
achievements].  
Fulfill me [with Buddhological attainment].  
Make me compassionate [to all beings].  
Grant me all siddhis [powers to aid others].  
Also, make my mind virtuous in all actions.  
HŪM HA HA HA HA HOH  
All the blessed Tathāgatas, do not abandon me.  
Make me indivisible [adamantine in my resolve],  
Great Pledge Being [Vajrasattva] ĀḤ HŪM.<sup>26</sup>

The identification of the central pair by inscription, although significant, does not resolve all the iconographic issues surrounding the image. The most problematic aspect of the iconography is the blue color of the central figures. The pair generally is portrayed and described as white (see cat. no. 116), and no known *sādhana* (practice manual) or text refers to them as blue. Therefore, the meaning and source of the blue color remain a mystery. The absence of textual references has led some art historians to speculate that this type of icon may actually be a form of the Ādi Buddha, who is always deep blue in color. However, with the newly discovered inscription (Tucci apparently missed it or chose for some reason not to publish it) specifically identifying the central figure as Vajrasattva, there can no longer be any doubt regarding the identity of this image.

#### PUBLISHED:

Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 3 vols. (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949), vol. 2, 331-332; Pratapaditya Pal, "Tibetan Religious Paintings in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts," *Arts in Virginia* 27, nos. 1-3 (1987), 46-49, figs. 2, 3.

1. It is also possible that there is an inscription on the back of the painting; however, Tucci's description of the painting does not note any, and I have not had access to the back of the painting due to the method of its mounting.
2. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. 2, 331-332.
3. Preliminary transliteration of these inscriptions into *dbus can* (style "with heads") was done by Professor Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, India. We are very grateful to Professor Thabkhe for his contribution and to Professor Jeffrey Hopkins of the University of Virginia for arranging for Professor Thabkhe to undertake the task. I have presumed to edit the transliterations provided and assume full responsibility for the accuracy of the readings and the identifications of the individuals and deities.
4. Tucci apparently added "the Buddha" to the identification of this figure on the basis of an assumption that any figure in the top center of a painting had to be the progenitor of the whole painting's iconography and therefore had to be a Buddha by definition. This is simply not the case; many rNying ma and Sa skya paintings have lineages across the top.
5. Since in this instance the inscription is very clear, Tucci's reading is inexplicable.
6. Tucci added *ston* without reference to either the lineage in question or to the historical context of the painting.
7. This is the only person in the direct lineage of the *mahāyoga* tradition whose name begins with Nya and ends in mChog. See Tarthang Tulku, "A History of Buddhist Dharma," *Crystal Mirror* 5 (1977), 325.
8. Since the characters are missing entirely this is not a "reading" but a visual identification by Tucci.
8. Tucci has added *Seng ge gdong ma* from a visual identification and ignored the inscription's content.
10. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 108. The root *tantra* of this system, the *Guhyamūlagarbha-tantra*, emphasizes appropriate action and the developmental stages (*bhūmi*) of the Bodhisattva path.
11. He had many more disciples, see *Blue Annals*, 109.
12. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 104.
13. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 108.
14. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 110-111.
15. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 123-124.
16. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 118-119.
17. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 119.
18. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 120.
19. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 124.
20. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 124.
21. In contrast to the lay context, where paintings are often made as an offering, frequently for a funerary or other passage rite event.
22. Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thankas Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* (Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984), 29-45.
23. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 120.
24. Samantabhadra imparts the teachings to the Heruka Che mchog who entrusts the teachings to the *sambhogakāya* Rig 'dzin rdo rje chos rab, who then gives it to a Dākinī and to Vajrasattva. Tarthang Tulku, "A History of Buddhist Dharma," 179.
25. Tarthang Tulku, "A History of Buddhist Dharma," 200.
26. Khetsun Sangpo Rinbochay, *Tantric Practice in Nying-ma*, trans. Jeffrey Hopkins (Ithaca, New York: Gabril/Snow Lion, 1982), 146; my brackets and punctuation throughout.

#### 106

VAJRADHĀTU VAIROCANA (TIB. RDO RJE DBYINGS RNAMS SNANG; pronounced Dorjaying namnang)

Tibet, Early Shar mthun bris

Ca. 1065-1085

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 21" W: 17"

Dr. Wesley Halpert and Mrs. Carolyn M. Halpert  
Illustrated in color

This painting portrays one of the most rarely encountered deities in the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. It is Vajradhātu Vairocana (Tib. rDo rje dbyings' rnam snang).<sup>2</sup> The painting was probably part of a set of at least five paintings

containing the five major deities of the yoga class of *tantras*. The set would have centered on Sarvavid Vajradhātu Vairocana and included Dharmadhātu Vāgīśvara Buddha, Uttamaśrī Buddha, Amoghasiddhi Buddha, and Vajradhātu Buddha, as found in the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra*.

Vajradhātu Vairocana and the Sarvavid Vairocana cycles over which he presides were important in the beginning of the Second Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, when the great *lo tsa ba* (translator) Rin chen bzang po (958-1055) was active. They are featured in both the *gSum brtsegs* and the 'Du khang at the famous eleventh-century monastery of Alchi in Ladakh. It is probable that soon after Atīśa's conversion of Rin chen bzang po in 1054, the former teachings of Rin chen bzang po receded into a secondary position. However, because of their explicitly protective function, the popularity of Sarvavid Vajradhātu Vairocana and the members of his various *maṇḍalas* never fully waned. The inheritor of this early Second Propagation teaching was the bKa' gdams (pronounced Kadam) sect, based on the teachings of Atīśa and founded by his disciple 'Brom ston (1003-1065). Since Rin chen bzang po and Atīśa met and exchanged views, it is generally assumed that Rin chen bzang po's teachings were transmitted to the bKa' gdams sect at an early date. The bKa' gdams pas perpetuated the teachings and transferred them to the dGe lugs sect, which preserved them to the present day. The dGe lugs (pronounced Gayluk) sect was founded by dGe 'dun grub<sup>3</sup> (pronounced Genduntrup; 1391-1475), a student of Tsong kha pa. Tsong kha pa was originally a bKa' gdams practitioner and was the major link whereby bKa' 'gdams teachings entered the dGe lugs lineages. Both bKa' gdams and dGe lugs teachers attracted major patrons for Sarvavid Vairocana rituals and images. A set of metal sculptures of a Sarvavid *maṇḍala* survives from the mid-eighteenth century. The Qianlong (Chien Lung) Emperor, a dGe lugs patron, presented the set to his mother as a part of her birthday present.<sup>4</sup>

The iconography of the painting and its close stylistic relationship to the painting of Vajrasattva in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (cat. no. 105) suggest a similar date for this Vajradhātu Vairocana, i.e., last quarter of this eleventh century. Since the bKa' gdams sect had come into existence in 1056, it is probable that this is a bKa' gdams painting in terms of its iconography. It is unlikely to have originated in any of the other sects. The rNying mas did not emphasize these deities, the Sa skya sect was founded in 1073 but emphasized entirely different teachings, and the bKa' brgyud sects were not founded until 1121, so the only real candidate for the sectarian source of the painting is the bKa' gdams sect. However, this sectarian attribution must remain tentative in the absence of a supporting inscription and in view of the

permeability of sectarian boundaries in Tibet. Disciples and even teachers often moved freely among the monasteries. Moreover, there were many independent temples during this time that conceivably might have spawned major sectarian lines had the historical conditions been conducive. Thus, while the iconographic evidence is nearly conclusive, the bKa' gdams attribution is still only a probability and not a certainty, although this painting has a stronger likelihood of being a bKa' gdams painting than any other early painting I have studied.

Across the bottom of the painting is a group of six deities: an unidentified Bodhisattva (location 2 in fig. 43); Amitāyus, the Buddha of the western paradise of Sukhāvatī (3); Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of wisdom (4); Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion (5); the wrathful form of Vajrapāṇi, which converts those who are difficult to convert (6); and Śyāma Tārā, who offers salvation from the eight perils (*aṣṭamahābhaya*) (7). It is impossible to know whether the actual patron of the painting or the *bla ma* overseeing the ceremonies for which the painting was initially intended determined the selection of the deities to be represented. However, this group of deities reinforces the protective nature of the Sarvavid cycle.

Above the protective deities is a group of eight Buddhas (A-H), set off from the rest of the composition by

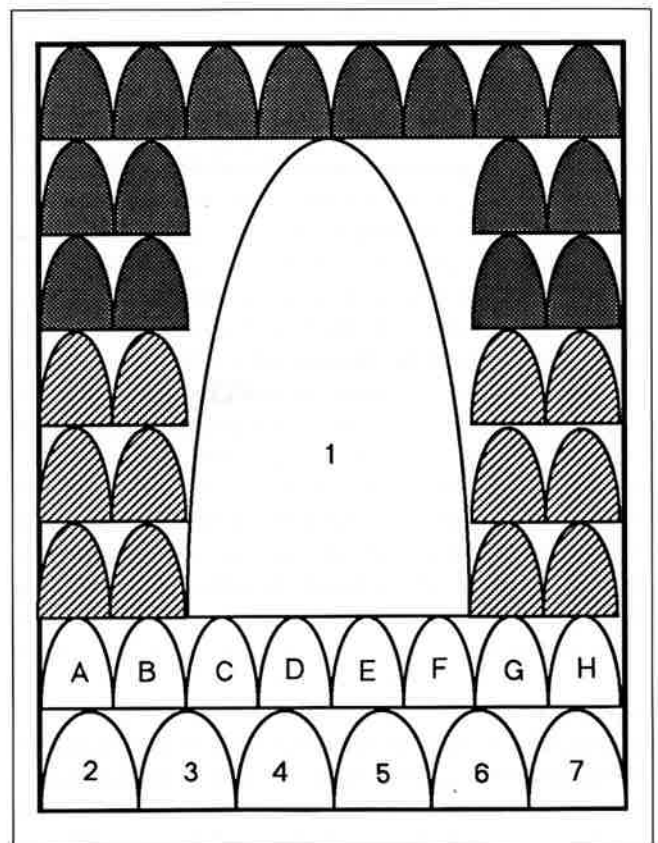


Figure 43. Diagram of cat. no. 106.

two horizontal yellow bands. Therefore, it is probable that this group is the seven Buddhas of the past and Maitreya (Tib. Byams pa), the Buddha of the future (Skt. Ketumatī Maitreya). The seven Buddhas of the past are Vipasyin (Tib. rNam gzigs), Śikhin (Tib. gTsug tor can), Viśabhū (Tib. Thams cad skyob), Krakucchanda (Tib. 'Khor ba 'jig), Kanakamuni (Tib. gSer Thub), Kāśyapa (Tib. 'Od srung), and Śākyamuni (Tib. Śākya thub pa). In later Tibetan iconography, these Buddhas are sometimes identifiable by specific *mudrās* (symbolic hand gestures), but in early representations no such iconographic pattern seems to have existed. In this case, what is important is that the eight Buddhas are set apart from the emanated entourage of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas above and on the sides of Vajradhātu Vairocana by the wide yellow band across the painting. The group is explicitly separated from the upper group of figures and is placed in a lower hierarchical position, indicating that they have a lower status than the figures above them, including the Bodhisattvas. This is a characteristic placement of the Mānuṣi Buddhas, supporting their identification in the absence of inscriptions or specific identifying characteristics. The identification is reinforced by the fact that the seven Buddhas of the past and Maitreya play an important role in the *yoga* class of tantras and by the fact that the citation on the reverse of the painting quotes the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra*, which is associated with the seven Buddhas of the past (Tib. *sangs rgyas rab bdun*, better known in western literature as the Mānuṣi Buddhas).

As noted above, stylistically the painting is closely related to the Early Shar mthun style painting of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 105), which is securely dated to between 1065 and 1085. The similarity of the two paintings can be observed in such details as the throne base, lotus petals, cloth draped over the throne, distinctive rectilinear shape of the auras behind the figures, curvilinear design in the secondary auras behind the heads of the main figures, and crowns of the main figures. The composition and the arrangement of the figures within the composition are dictated by iconographic considerations and may not be counted as stylistic features. The two main differences between the two paintings are the use of painted gems in the Vajrasattva painting and the use of triangular throne backs and gold paint in this painting. These features are essentially discretionary and would not be dictated by a stylistic school. Indeed, the use of decorative touches of gold paint would be determined by the patron rather than the artist. Given this remarkable closeness in style, this painting may be assigned a date virtually identical to that of the Vajrasattva painting, around 1065 to 1085. Thus, this is an important addition to the small group of paintings from this period that have come to light.

Two features of this painting are the earliest known occurrences of their type. First, the use of gold for

ornamentation of the main figure and the attendant Bodhisattvas is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, documented occurrences of this technical process. The gold would have been supplied by the patron of the painting and prepared into pigment by the artist. The gold represents the patron's attempt to make the offering as lavish and elaborate as possible. Vairocana preaches in Akaniṣṭha heaven, the highest of the form realms (Skt. *rūpadhātu*), and his palace adorns the center of this transcendent realm. According to tradition Akaniṣṭha is conceived as a place of inconceivable opulence. The use of gold and, in the case of the Virginia painting the representation of gems, are intended to convey its splendor. Second, the use of the highly schematized triangular throne backs—the muted yellow triangles extending to either side of most of the subsidiary figures in the painting—can be traced from their first known occurrence in Gandhāran sculpture (fig. 44) into late seventh-century Indic sculpture.



Figure 44. Maitreya in Tuṣita Paradise. From Gandhāra region, Pakistan. Lahore Museum.

This painting bears the first known example of this convention in Tibetan painting.

One other notable stylistic feature of this painting is the use of the “detached farther eye,” as used here for two secondary faces of Vajradhātu, the red and blue faces to the viewer's right. This feature is widely used in later Indian painting, but its conceptual and historical sources are obscure. Although it is commonly associated with western Indian miniature paintings of the twelfth century and later, it may have been a pan-Indic convention. The motif is found in both Kashmiri painting in the gSum brtsegs at Alchi<sup>5</sup> and in the engraved stone worshippers at the Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā (fig. 45), suggesting its widespread use in India in the eleventh century. Its use in the Early Shar mthun bris school of Tibet apparently represents a direct link with the Pāla convention. The convention died out in Tibet with the end of the Early Shar





Figure 45. Pavement slab carving of devotees. Mahābodhi Temple, Bodh Gayā, Bihar, India.

mithun bris school and is a rarity even in known paintings of that idiom.

Both the iconography and style of this painting greatly help to define the parameters of eleventh-century Tibetan painting of the Early Shar mithun bris school.

#### INSCRIPTION:

On the reverse of the painting is a relatively long religious invocation. Unfortunately, it does not contain either the name of the donor or of a monastery where the painting might have been dedicated. It reads:

Om̐

Om̐ sarba bhyid Sā Hā

Ā (Āḥ)

Om̐ Hūm̐ Trām̐ Hrim̐ A

Hūm̐

Om̐ A Hūm̐ Om̐ Sarba Bhyid Sarva □ pa tra na

Bī Sho//Dā A Dā Na Hūm̐ Phat Om̐ Sarba Bhyid Hūm̐

Verse from the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra*:

(1) □ bzod pa dka' thub dam pa bzod pa yi

myang ngan 'das pa mthog ces sangs rgyas

gsungs rab tu byung ba gzhan la gnod pa dan  
gzhan la 'tse ba dge

sbyong ma yin no//Om̐ Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā  
hetun teṣān tathāgato

hy avadata teṣān ca yo nirodha ye [for E] vambādi  
mahā śramaṇaḥ ye

Svā Hā<sup>6</sup>

"The patience that is being able to withstand the holy practice of asceticism was said by the Buddha to be the supreme *nirvāṇa*. A monk does no harm to another. He who does injury to another is no *śramaṇa*."<sup>7</sup>

1. Spelling following Walter Eugene Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons* (1937; reprint, New York: Paragon Book Reprint, 1965). Alternate spellings of *byings* and *bhyings* are known, and standard lexicons give *byings* as the modern orthography. All are pronounced "ying."
2. Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, 115 (4M4).
3. Posthumously known as the First Dalai Lama.
4. Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, xii-xiii. The images found on the Baoxing lou (Pao-hsiang Lou) in the Beijing palace are generally believed to be part of the sets of images presented to his mother by the Qianlong (Chien-lung) Emperor on the occasions of her sixtieth (in 1751) and seventieth (in 1761) birthdays. Whatever their source, the images are dated to the Qianlong era, and include the entire Sarvavid cycle. Clark, 114-147 (chapel 4).
5. Huntington and Huntington, *Art of Ancient India* pls. 16 and 19.
6. Spelling as on the painting. The last section is also known as the *pratisamyutpāda mantra*.
7. Translation provided by José Cabezón.

107

#### VAJRĀSANA VISUALIZATION WITH LIFE SCENES OF ŚĀKYAMUNI BUDDHA FROM THE AṢṬAMAHĀPRĀTIHĀRYA CYCLE AND THE LALITAVISTARA

Tibet, Early Shar mithun bris

Late eleventh or early twelfth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 31 1/2" W: 23 1/2"

The Zimmerman Family Collection

Illustrated in color

This iconographically complex painting combines two separate but parallel and complementary iconographies of the life of the Buddha into one format (fig. 46). First, the major images of the composition are from the *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* (AMP) sequence (see introduction to the Pāla Period and Appendix I), consisting of AMP 1, the birth; AMP 2, the victory over Māra (Skt. *Māravijaya*); AMP 3, the first sermon (Skt. *dharmacakra pravartana*); AMP 4, the display of supernatural powers at Śrāvastī (Skt. *mahāprātihārya*); AMP 5, the descent from Trāyastriṃśa at Sāmkāśya in the company of the gods Brahmā and Indra (Skt. *devarohana*); AMP 6, the taming of the mad elephant Nāḷagiri; AMP 7, the gift of honey from the monkey at Vaiśālī; and AMP 8, the death of Śākyamuni (Skt. *parinirvāṇa*).

In addition to this well-established iconographic program, a sequence derived from the twelve deeds of the Buddha as found in the *Lalitavistara*<sup>2</sup> (LV) is also depicted. Starting with the fourth event, LV 4, the birth of the Bodhisattva (the future Buddha), the sequence of eight of the last nine of the twelve deeds encircles the central composition in a clockwise direction. LV 4, the birth of Siddhārtha, is identical with the scene from the



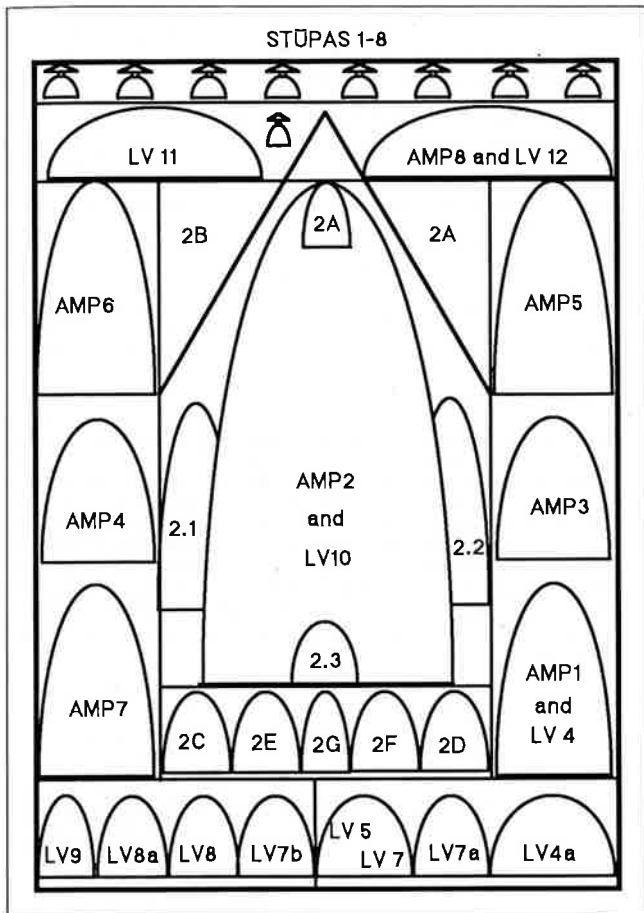


Figure 46. Diagram of cat. no. 107.

*aṣṭamahāprātihārya* composition. LV 4a continues the events of the birth narrative in the *Lalitavistara*. It portrays the visit of the sage Asita who, while overjoyed at the promise of future Buddhahood for the infant, is overcome with grief for himself because he has sought all his life the enlightenment that the Bodhisattva will attain and realizes that he will not live even to witness the event. The sage is shown in two positions: first, on one knee making his prediction of future enlightenment for the Buddha to King Sudhodana, who holds the infant Bodhisattva, and second, doubled over in grief because he will not live to witness the great event.

In LV 5, the group of archers behind the figure mounted on the horse characterizes the youthful life of Siddhārtha, which culminated in the series of contests by which he won his future bride, Yaśodhara. In the *Lalitavistara* the archery contest is described in great detail and is the culminating event in the sequence of competitions for the bride. By winning the contests, the Bodhisattva proved his superiority over his peers and also won the right to move on to the next stage of his life—that of a married householder.

[LV 6 (not included in this composition) is the

sequence of his four trips out of the sequestered palace in which Siddhārtha sees an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a renunciant who is seeking release. These events convince the young prince that there was something beyond the life of luxury and pleasure that he was living and set the stage for his becoming an ascetic.]

LV 7 is the great departure of Siddhārtha on his white horse Kaṇṭhaka in the company of his groom Chandaka when he takes leave of the palace and retires to the hills to become a wandering mendicant. LV 7a is the return of the horse Kaṇṭhaka to the home court of Siddhārtha at Kapilavastu. Kaṇṭhaka carries on his back the jewelry, specifically Siddhārtha's princely crown, as shown in the composition, which he had removed in order to take up his new life. LV 7b continues the same set of events with the renounced prince cutting off his long hair to become a shaven-headed mendicant.

LV 8 is the practice of extreme asceticism, illustrated in Tibetan iconography even at this early date by two youths poking cotton with a long stick into the ears of the ascetic Siddhārtha who they have mistaken for a statue due to his emaciation and motionlessness<sup>2</sup>. (The text tells that Siddhārtha cleared his ears by blowing the cotton out through his nose!) LV 8a is the termination of the practice of extreme asceticism when Siddhārtha accepts food from the village girl named Sujātā.

LV 9 shows the Buddha-to-be seated on the *kuśa* grass seat at the moment of making the vow to remain at the *bodhimanda* until he receives enlightenment.<sup>3</sup> LV 10 is the conquest of Māra, or Māravijaya, and is identical with AMP 2. LV 11 is the first sermon of the Buddha at Sārṇāth<sup>4</sup> (i.e. the Mṛgadāva, or the Deer Park, near modern Vārāṇasī) and differs compositionally from the AMP version. The figure of the five mendicants still surround the Buddha as in the AMP version, but on the left of the composition are three Buddhas and three Bodhisattvas who apparently have come to hear the sermon. The account in the AMP may not have agreed closely with the LV, or this may be simply a compositional device.

LV 12, the *parinirvāṇa* scene, is the same scene as AMP 8.

A final element in the paintings that combines yet another feature of the diverse narratives of the life of the Buddha into the whole is the eight miniature *stūpas*, or *caityas*, across the top of the painting. There are two possible interpretations of the set of eight *stūpas*. They could either be those *stūpas* representing the *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* themselves or the *stūpas* into which the Buddha's relics were placed at the time of his death. Since the *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* are already represented in the painting, and since in Indian *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* scenes the relic *stūpas* are usually at the top, it must be presumed that these were intended to be the relic *stūpas*.<sup>5</sup> This element completes the narrative of the Buddha's life and

has its roots in the early (Pāli) *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta*, which describes in detail the last days, death, cremation, and distribution of the relics of Śākyamuni Buddha.

This painting is virtually identical stylistically to the Early Shar mthun bris paintings of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 105) and Vajradhātu Vairocana (cat. no. 106) and thus can be assigned confidently to ca. 1065-1085 or only slightly later. Even though it is profoundly based on the Pāla style and iconographic conventions it contains a remarkable feature that is apparently wholly Tibetan—an iconographic synthesis of two iconographic programs. This suggests an emerging intellectual maturity among the Tibetan teachers that is beyond what one would expect in the new re-proselytized Tibetans.

On the whole, the painting must be understood as both an extension of what we know about the Early Shar mthun bris style, and an important insight into early Tibetan religious thinking.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Nepal: Where the Gods are Young* (New York: The Asia Society in association with John Weatherhill, Inc., 1975), 24-25, 71, no. 3; Pratapaditya Pal, organizer, *Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian Art* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1984), 24, 63, no. 11; Valrae Reynolds, "The Zimmerman Family Collection," in *American Collectors of Asian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1986), 176-177, fig. 11.

1. An English translation of the *Lalitavistara-sūtra* recently has become available. See Gwendolyn Bays, trans. [from Edouard Foucaux' French], *The Voice of the Buddha, The Beauty of Compassion*, 2 vols. (Oakland, California: Dharma Publishing, 1983). For immediate reference, two lists of the twelve deeds from secondary sources are given below:

I. From a list given in F. D. Lessing and A. Wayman, trans., *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems* (mkhas grub rje's Rgyud sde spyi hi rnam par gzag pa rgyas par brjod) (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1980), 25, citing the *Mahāyānottara-tantra*:

- 1) The descent from Tuṣita
- 2) Entrance into the womb
- 3) Rebirth
- 4) Skill in worldly arts
- 5) Enjoyment of harem women
- 6) Departure from home
- 7) Arduous discipline
- 8) Passage to the precincts of illumination
- 9) Defeat of Māra's host
- 10) Complete illumination
- 11) The wheel of the law
- 12) Departure into *nirvāṇa*

II. From a list given by Thinley Norbu in *The Small Golden Key to the Treasure of the Various Essential Necessities of General and Extraordinary Buddhist Dharma*, 2nd ed. (New York: Jewel Publishing House, 1985), 3-4:

1. Leaving Tuṣita heaven for this world in the form of an ash white elephant.
2. Entering the womb of his mother, Māyādevī
3. Taking birth at Lumbini and then taking seven steps in each of the four directions
4. Learning the arts, such as writing, mathematics, and archery
5. Engaging in sports with other young men and enjoying the company of his consorts
6. Abandoning the princely life at the age of twenty-nine to become a

self-ordained monk

7. Enduring many hardships for six years by the river Nairāṇjana
8. Sitting beneath the *bodhi* tree in Bodhi Gayā
9. Defeating the hosts of demons that night
10. Attaining Buddhahood at dawn
11. Turning the Wheel of Dharma at Sarnāth
12. Passing into *nirvāṇa*
2. In a radical misunderstanding of the whole painting schema, Pratapaditya Pal has called this the enlightenment. See Pratapaditya Pal (organizer), *Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian Art* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1984), 63.
3. Pal has included this scene with Sujāta's gift (*Light of Asia*, 63). In the text, however, they are different events and Sujāta is not associated with the *bodhi* in any way.
4. It cannot be, as Pal has suggested (*Light of Asia*, p. 63), the Bodhisattva in Tuṣita deciding on the time and place of his birth. The figure is shown as the Buddha and not as the Bodhisattva and is surrounded by five monks, an obvious reference to the first sermon.
5. These are 1) Rājagṛha, built by Ajātaśatru; 2) Vaiśālī, built by the Licchavis; 3) Allakappa, built by the Bulis; 4) Rāmāgama, built by the Koliyas; 5) Vethadīpa, built by Vethadīpaka the *brāhmana*; 6) Pāvā, built by the Mallas (of Pāvā); 7) Kuśinagara built by the Mallas (of Kuśinagara); and 8) Pippalavāna, built by the Moriyas (or, according to other lists, Kapilavastu, built by the Śākyas). See the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta* in T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Buddhist Suttas*, vol. 11 of *Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1881; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968), 134-35. Four of these—Rājagṛha, Vaiśālī, Kuśinagara, and Kapilavastu—have been identified archaeologically. See John C. Huntington, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism, Part 5 [Kuśinagara, Appendices and Notes]," *Orientalism* 17, no. 9 (Sept. 1986): 46-58.

108

ŚYĀMA TĀRĀ (TIB. SGROL LJANG MA; pronounced Droljangma; ALSO KNOWN AS AṢṬAMAHĀBHAYA TĀRĀ AND KHADIRAVANĪ TĀRĀ)

Tibet, Early Shar mthun bris

Ca. twelfth century (or earlier)

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 48" W: 31 1/2"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Illustrated in color

Śyāma Tārā (Tib. sGrol ljang ma), often called Green Tārā, is one of the most popular deities of Tibet. Protectress from evil and harm, bestower of salvation, and personification of *prajñā* (transcendent wisdom), infinite compassion (*karuṇā*), and *śūnyatā* (the emptiness of unconditioned potentiality), Tārā has profound and complex nuances at every level of Buddhist thought and practice. Tārā occurs in a multitude of iconographic forms. This form is best known as Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā, literally, "Tārā (Who Delivers from) the Eight Great Perils". She is described in the *Sādhana-mālā* as seated on a lotus in *lalitāsana*, that is, with one leg hanging down, displaying *varada mudrā* with her right hand, holding an *utpala* (blue lotus) in her left, and surrounded by eight subsidiary Tārās. Her *mantra*, OM TĀRE TUTTĀRE TURE SVĀ HĀ, does not occur on the front of the painting, but may occur on the back.<sup>1</sup> The *Sādhana-mālā* states that worship of Tārā will save one from the eight perils, but does not list the perils, perhaps assuming that the practitioner already will be familiar

with them. The standard list of the eight perils is fire, water, lion, elephant, imprisonment (guilt notwithstanding!), snakes (*nāgas*), disease caused by malevolent spirits, and thieves. Sometimes the perils are given a metaphorical rather than literal significance. For example, lions are taken to signify pride and fire to signify anger, that is, faults that one must overcome in the course of Buddhist practice.

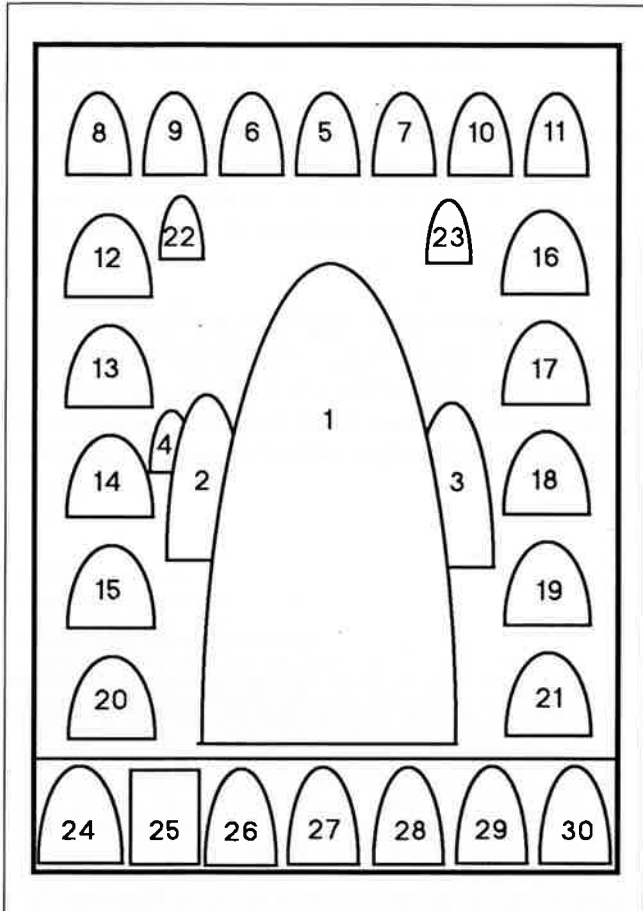


Figure 47. Diagram of cat. no. 108.

Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā (no. 1 in fig. 47) is accompanied to her left by Aśokakāntā (3) and to her right by Ekajaṭā (2). These two nearly identical figures hold different objects and may originally have been distinguishable on the basis of these attributes. Unfortunately neither attribute is clearly visible in this painting. Behind Ekajaṭā is a second figure (4) who is unusual in this context. She is Vārāhī (Tib. 'Khor phag mo), whose occurrence with these two attendants is not attested in any text known to us.

The seven figures arrayed across the top of the painting are the five Jina Buddhas: Amoghasiddhi in the center (no. 5 in the diagram) attended by Bodhisattvas (6 and 7), Ratnasambhava (8), Amitābha (9), Vairocana (10), and Akṣobhya (11). Beside the main image are eight

additional images of Tārā (12-19), each accompanied by a devotee in the act of receiving blessings from the secondary images of Tārā. Beneath them are two pairs of Bodhisattvas (20 and 21), each pair consisting of one male and one female Bodhisattva. The bottom row, starting at the viewer's left, consists of an image of the patron of the painting (24) with an offering stand in front of him (25) and five images of Mañjuśrī (26-30). The images of Mañjuśrī, each with six arms, constitute the *maṇḍala* of Arapacana Mañjuśrī as found in the *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgīti-dhāraṇī-sūtra* and elsewhere.

The position of the Buddha Amoghasiddhi (as opposed to Vairocana, who nominally would be in the center position) above Tārā's head associates her with the *kula* (family) of Amoghasiddhi, in reference to the Jina Buddhas *maṇḍala*, in which context Tārā appears as Amoghasiddhi's female Buddha consort (Skt. *Buddhaprajñā*).

This image also bears features of another major form of Tārā, Khadiravaṇī Tārā. Normally Śyāma Tārā would not appear with these two attendants, but Khadiravaṇī Tārā characteristically is accompanied by Aśokakāntā and Ekajaṭā. Khadiravaṇī, which literally means the "female sound of the *khadira* (*Acacia catechu*) tree," may be a reference to some medicinal property of the tree or its fruit. Khadiravaṇī Tārā is known to live in a lush forest of medicinal *khadira* trees, which may appear among the trees depicted across the top of the mountains in the composition. The mountains in the background of the composition also suggest the identification of the central figure as Khadiravaṇī Tārā, for Khadiraka is the name of one of the seven mountains that surround Mount Sumeru and is the place where the legendary tree grows.

Khadiravaṇī Tārā was the patron deity of Atiśa,<sup>2</sup> who is probably the figure portrayed in the upper left corner of the central portion of the painting (22). The figure is wearing a Bengali *paṇḍita* hat characteristically worn by Atiśa. It was not until a considerably later date that Tibetan monks presumed to have themselves shown in the same type of garb as the great proselytizer of the Second Propagation, and therefore the figure is likely to represent Atiśa. The figure to the right (23) is probably Atiśa's primary disciple, 'Brom ston (pronounced Dromtön), the founder of the bKa' gdams sect.

The location of these two figures in the upper portion of the painting indicates that they are lineage holders or founders of the teachings represented and not necessarily that they were alive when the painting was made. The date of this painting is possibly several years past the date of 'Brom ston's death in 1065. Both Atiśa and 'Brom ston had many disciples, but without inscriptional evidence it is impossible to determine who their direct successor in the lineage might have been or who the patron (24) of the painting was. Unfortunately, the fact that Atiśa and his

disciple 'Brom ston appear as the lineage masters does not definitely identify this as a bKa' gdams painting. Since the two had many disciples and are universally respected by adherents of all the Tibetan sects, any sectarian affiliation would be a possibility by the time of this painting. Only an identification of the patron by inscription would reveal the sectarian ancestry of the painting.

The basic convention for the iconographic scheme and many of the stylistic features of the image are shared with an eleventh-century, Pāla period stone image from Somapura in Vajrayogini village, Dhaka District, Bangladesh, now in the Dhaka Museum (fig. 48)<sup>3</sup>. While the position of the figure and the attributes held are determined iconographically, the position of the extended leg, the tilt of the head, the raised lotus on a long stalk, and the remarkable closeness of details like the jewelry and crowns are all stylistic conventions that the two pieces share. Even the highly convoluted vine scrolls are related, albeit not identical. One remarkable feature is the offerant in the lower right section of the stele. Wearing a Bengali *paṇḍita* hat and seated next to a raised offering table and two overflowing bowls of gifts to the goddess, he parallels

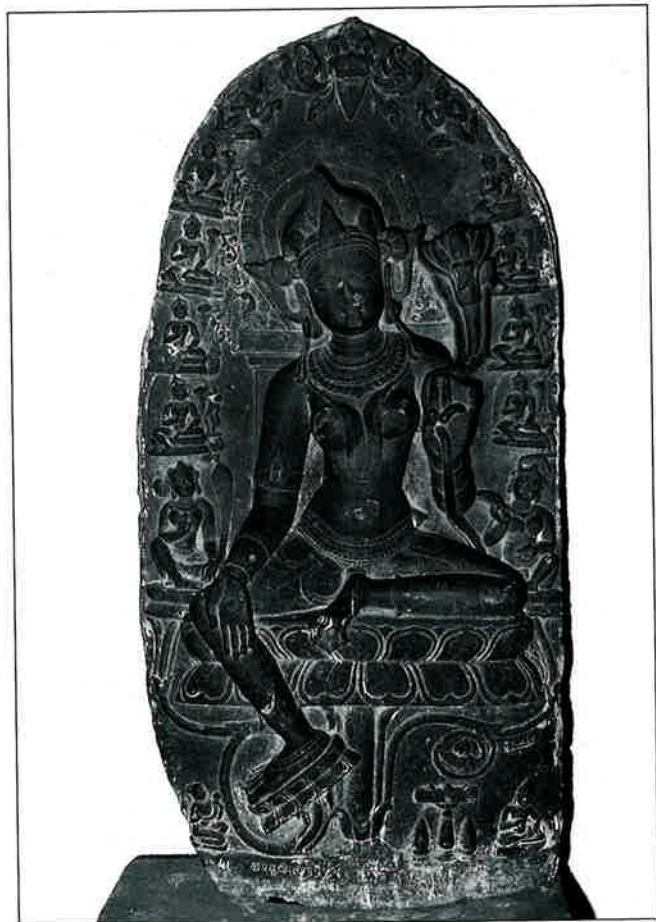


Figure 48. Tārā. Vajrayoginī village, Somapura, Dhaka District, Bangladesh. Dhaka Museum.

exactly the offerant in the lower left corner (24-25) of this painting. While the offerings differ, the heaped bowl and the stand with offerings on it are nearly identical.

From the foregoing it may be suggested that this depiction of Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā was painted following a Bengali model shortly after 'Brom ston's lifetime and closely reflected styles and traditions in the eastern Indian schools at the time. However, it is doubtful that the Tibetans ever distinguished between the Shar mthun bris schools of what is now West Bengal State in India and Bangladesh and those schools that existed in Bihar. Indeed, based on a comparison of the type and degree of ornamentation, the lotus petals, and the anatomical structures of the figures, it may be argued that the painting belongs to the same basic genre as the three previous paintings and, as a virtually pure example of the eastern Indian idiom, can be classified as Early Shar mthun bris.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Painting: A Study of Tibetan Thankas, Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* (Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984), 224-225; Eva Ray, "John Gilmore Ford (1934-)," in *American Collectors of Asian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1986), 201, no. 15.

1. I was not able to examine the reverse of this painting and therefore am unaware of any inscriptions. The *mantra* should be included among them if there are any.
2. Stephan Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā: Magic and Ritual in Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 320.
3. For discussion of this sculpture, including previous publication and identification(s), see Mallar Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India: A Study of Tārā, Prajñās of Five Tathāgatas and Bhṛikūṭī* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1980), 42-43.

109

VAIROCANA (TIB. RNAM PAR SNANG MDZAD;  
pronounced Nampar nangzay)

India, Ladakh, collected at Po monastery in Spiti, Early  
Shar mthun bris  
Ca. twelfth century  
Water-based pigments on cotton cloth  
H: 25 1/2" W: 22"  
University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology,  
Koelz Collection  
Illustrated in color

Collected by the intrepid University of Michigan explorer, Walter Norman Koelz, during his 1933-1934 anthropological expedition to "western Tibet," i.e., Zangskar and Ladakh, this *thang ka* is one of the very few early paintings that comes from a known site, the Po monastery in the Spiti District of Himachal Pradesh in



Himalayan India.<sup>1</sup> Since *thang kas* travelled easily and lack internal evidence of place of origin, nothing can be inferred directly from the monastic association without corroborating evidence. However, the Shar mthun bris style exists in several wall paintings in the Ladakh area, and since the style definitely had proponents in the region, a local, or at least regional, origin for this painting is probable. In particular among the Ladakhi paintings that relate to this painting are those at Alchi in the Lha khang So ma and at Gomba in both the "hermit's house" at a local gSum brtsegs and in the "lha khang" some thousand meters to the north of Gomba.<sup>2</sup> While obviously rooted in the Pāla idiom, the Ladakhi paintings have a number of stylistic differences from this Vairocana that suggest either a different source tradition or a local tradition divergent from a common source.

The figure in the center of the painting is Vairocana (Tib. rNam par snang mdzad) (fig. 49, 1). The universal Buddha is attended by what appear to be two rather nonspecific Bodhisattvas. Their colors would indicate that they are Samantabhadra, who is white (3) and Mañjuśrī, who is golden yellow (2). Although the colors support this identification, no other characteristics of identification, such as headdresses or attributes, offer further evidence of their identities. Other pairs who attend Vairocana are Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, and Avalokiteśvara and

Vajrapāṇi. Neither of these pairs seems to be the one intended, because by this date Avalokiteśvara invariably would be shown holding his characteristic lotus. Therefore, despite the lack of desired specificity in their portrayal, these two Bodhisattvas seem most likely to be Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī, which suggests an association with the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. While the details of this association may be lost in the long forgotten intentions of the iconographic authority behind this image, the general message of the universality of Vairocana remains as the main theme of the painting.

Vairocana is also attended by two monks with *khakkharas*, or mendicant staffs (4,5). Without inscriptions or knowledge of the exact iconographic program depicted in the painting, it is impossible to determine which of two possible pairs of disciples these figures might be. In the Tibetan tradition they normally would be the two disciples of the Buddha known as the "two best" (Tib. *gnyis mchog*), Maudgalyāyana and Śāriputra; however, in the Vairocana iconography of East Asia, from which the iconography of the painting may have derived, they normally would be Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa. In either case, the presence of the two monks expresses the identity between Vairocana and Śākyamuni and suggests that some of his disciples were able to see Śākyamuni in his universal aspect.

Surrounding the central group are one hundred twenty-three Buddhas, the four Lokapālas (Tib. *'jig rten skyong*, literally, "world-protectors," sometimes called the "heavenly kings," Tib. *rgyal chen bzhi*) (6-9), and thirteen Hindu deities (across the bottom of the painting). Depending on the textual tradition, Vairocana is either the transcendent *dharmakāya* (Dharma-body) or immaterial but visible *sambhogakāya* (body of bliss, or enjoyment). In either case, from every pore of his body he emanates an infinite number of embodied *nirmānakāya* ("transformation body") Buddhas that reside among the mundane beings in the six realms of rebirth. In addition, he also emanates a many-layered pantheon including such figures as Lokapālas and Dikpālas, who further aid in the conversion and spiritual maturation of all sentient beings. The multiplicity of Buddhas surrounding Vairocana express the universality of Vairocana as the source of all Buddhas and the infinitude of Buddhas that fill every atom of space. In a context such as this, these secondary Buddhas were not necessarily specific, but were meant to convey the infinity of Buddhas. Thus, the number 123 may simply have been an arbitrary number determined by how many Buddhas the available space would accommodate. However, there may also be an intended reference to a text like the *Āryabhadra kalpa-sūtra*, which gives the names and characteristics of the thousand Buddhas of this aeon.

Without knowing if any other paintings may have accompanied this one, it is difficult to pinpoint the iconography. However, some deductions are possible.

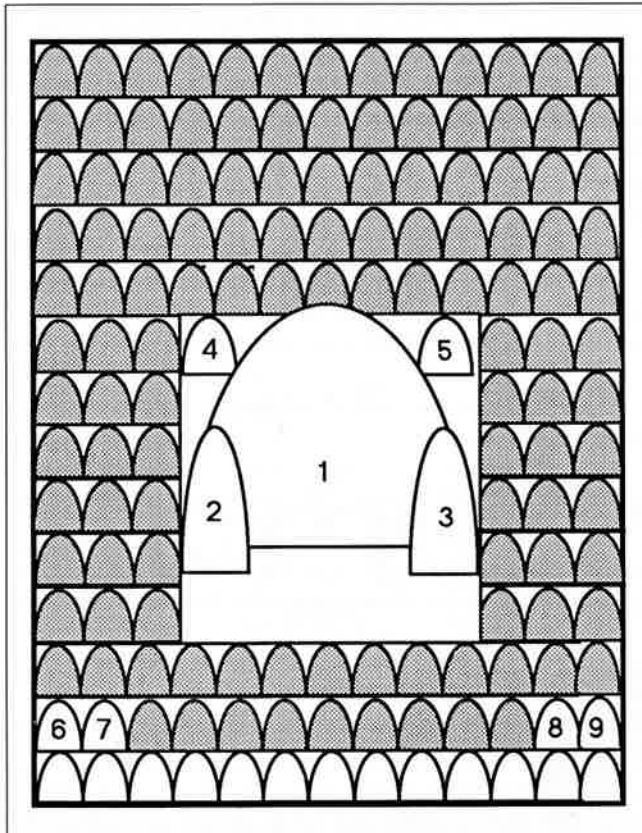


Figure 49. Diagram of cat. no. 109.

Indeed, the five colors of the Buddhas—alternating white, yellow, red, blue-green (for green), and blue—suggests that here Vairocana is the *dharmakāya* emanating all of the *sambhogakāya* Buddhas of the five Jina Buddha *maṇḍala*.<sup>3</sup> Another facet of interpretation is suggested by the distinctive color arrangement of the Buddhas. White Buddhas in two diagonal lines diverging from the top center and reaching the sides about midway down each side form a “gable” of white Buddhas over the head of the central figure. This emphasizes the preeminence of the central white figure as the progenitor of the whole and draws attention to his role as progenitor of the long-life deities—Sita Tārā, Uṣṇīṣavijayā, and Amitāyus. Thus, the painting may have expressed a wish for long life by the patron either for himself (or herself) or for a family member.

The iconography and armor of the Lokapālas at the right and left ends of the second register from the bottom (6-9) are important for understanding the historical sources and context of the painting. In general, the function of the Lokapālas is to protect the world by standing guard in the four cardinal directions. Identifiable by their traditional colors, they are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, white, guardian of the east (Tib. Yul 'khor bsrung, pronounced Yulkorsung) (6); Vaiśravaṇa, yellow, guardian of the north (Tib. rNam thos sras, pronounced Namtösay) (7); Virūpākṣa, red, guardian of the west (Tib. sPyan mi bzang, pronounced Chenmizang) (8); and Virūdhāka, blue, guardian of the south (Tib. 'Phyags skyes po; pronounced Chakyaypo) (9). This is one of the earliest known painted representations of the four Lokapālas. (For a later version in the Bal bris style, see cat. no. 119.)

At the time of this painting, the standard Tibetan iconographic conventions for the Lokapālas apparently had not yet developed. Vaiśravaṇa conventionally carries a banner of victory (Skt. *vijayadhvaja*) and a mongoose vomiting precious gems (Skt. *cintāmaṇi*) of Buddhist Dharma. However, in this painting he carries a sword in his right hand and makes the threatening *tarjanī mudrā*. Dhṛtarāṣṭra usually carries a stringed instrument known as a vina. In this painting he carries no attribute but curls the forefingers of both hands to meet the thumbs while extending the little finger. This unusual gesture is not a standard *mudrā*; it may be a convention for a figure who is supposed to hold something or may be some other unidentified iconographic convention. Virūpākṣa may be holding one of his usual attributes, a snake. The object is simply too small and lacks enough detail to determine if it is a rope or a snake. However, his primary attribute, a *stūpa*, is absent.<sup>4</sup> The blue figure, Virūdhāka, usually carries a sword, but here he holds what appears to be a four-pointed gem in his right hand, while his left hand simply rests on the lower front of his tunic. The East Asian iconography of the Lokapālas also had not become fixed by this time, as seen in the many variants of Tang Chinese

and Tang-derived Nara period Japanese images of them. Therefore, the state of flux indicated by this ca. twelfth-century Tibetan example probably reflects the variability of its East Asian prototypes.

The primary significance of the Lokapālas here is the evidence they provide for Chinese influence on Tibetan painting. There are no known occurrences of the Lokapālas in Pāla art,<sup>5</sup> but even were examples to emerge, the Chinese treatment of these Lokapālas demonstrates unquestionable reliance on Chinese prototypes. The figures have been heavily Tibetanized; for instance, their robes and boots are clearly Tibetan in style. However, their armor and helmets reveal their Chinese heritage. The designs for the helmets are traceable to eighth- and ninth-century depictions at Dunhuang, as in the close-fitting helmet with wide, curving cheek pieces. By the ninth and tenth centuries (the time of the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang), the morphology of the helmet convention had changed and the former cheek pieces had evolved into a curving flared and uplifted skirt around the neck of the back of the helmet (see fig. 50). The armor worn by all four Lokapālas is an adaptation of Central Asian armor (probably originally Sogdian) that was transmitted to Dunhuang<sup>6</sup> in the sixth or seventh century and from there transmitted throughout East Asia and trans-Himalayan Inner Asia. The body armor consists of a plate mail cuirass, presumably of small plates linked together (see Virūpākṣa [8]), over the torso with great epaulières at the shoulders and flaring tuilles hanging at both sides protecting the thighs. Both the arms and lower legs are unprotected. This type of armor survived in actual examples of plate and chain mail, as seen in photographs of early twentieth-century ceremonies at Lhasa.

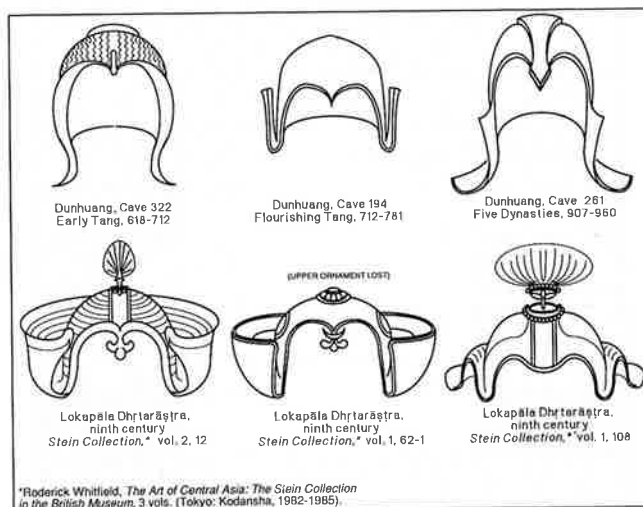


Figure 50. Helmets worn by Lokapālas in Tang dynasty paintings from Dunhuang.

The iconography and style of the Lokapālas are significant in several ways. First, the Tang Chinese origins,

or transmission, of the helmets and armor indicates that the Tibetan interpretation of images of the Lokapālas was derived from Chinese conventions for them—i.e., the “four heavenly kings”—around the ninth or early tenth century. Second, the Tibetanization of the images of the Lokapālas, as seen in their Tibetan robes and boots, means that their convention had been completely incorporated into Tibetan artistic idioms, suggesting both a relatively long iconographic tradition and a very active, creative artistic environment in Tibet. Third, because the Lokapālas were added morphologically intact to this painting, without any attempt to Indianize them to agree with the new school of painting that was in fashion, it appears that artists of the old school were suddenly pressed into service in a stylistic convention that was both new and unfamiliar to them. When the application of the new school was clear to them, they adopted it, but when there was no new convention for the image in question the artists resorted to a familiar style of treatment. Therefore, the art historical importance of these guardian figures far exceeds their relatively minor role in the iconographic scheme of the painting. They demonstrate that Tibetan painting before the Second Propagation derived influences from the Chinese heartland.

Across the bottom of the painting is a series of thirteen figures, all apparently from the Hindu pantheon of northern India. They are, from the left: Brahmā on his *haṃsa* (wild goose), Indra on his elephant, Agni on a goat, an unidentified white figure on unknown creature [a second Iśāna on a bull?], Kubera on a man, Varuṇa on a *makara*, Yama on a buffalo, an unidentified yellow figure on a blue horse?, Iśāna/Maheśvara (Śiva), Sūrya Ādita, Candra, an unidentified yellow female, and a *nāga* king. The group does not conform to any known fixed set, but includes major deities, figures from the eight Dikpālas (guardians of the eight directions) and the *navagraha* (nine planets), and a *nāgarāja* (serpent king). It is apparent that the group is intended to demonstrate the support of Buddhism by the entire Hindu pantheon, and the inclusion of these deities represents a common element in early Tantric Buddhist iconography. Their location in the hierarchy of the painting is the lowest position. They occur at the outer edge of the *maṇḍala*, where they function as *lokarakṣās* (Tib. *’jig rten pa’i srung ma*), mundane but powerful “worldly protectors” who are themselves unenlightened but who serve and protect the Buddhist Dharma.

The date of this important painting is an open question. The Pāla idiom arrived in the western regions of the Tibetan cultural sphere with Atiśa in 1042 and after the conversion of Rin chen bzang po to Atiśa’s teachings in 1054 became a major artistic influence in the region. However, the painting is relatively poorly executed (perhaps by the hand of a new or unskilled disciple of an

Indian master?) and has definitively Tibetan elements in it. It is therefore already somewhat adapted to the Tibetan cultural sphere. On the other hand, there is no trace of Nepali influence. This suggests that it was made before the advent of Nepali influence in the region, which seems to have occurred in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Accordingly, the painting can be placed in the late eleventh or in the first three quarters of the twelfth century, that is, between about 1075 and 1175. This normally could be taken as the terminus of the possible date, were it not for the fact that, in the remote valleys of Spiti and Zangskar and even in the more well-travelled Ladakh, styles that elsewhere had evolved or been replaced may have enjoyed greater longevity. While Spiti may have been somewhat less isolated than other areas, its relative isolation still may have been a factor. Therefore, it is not impossible that the painting could date to as late as the thirteenth century.

Ultimately this painting can be counted as one of the major documents of Early Shar mthun bris style. Its collection was documented, it displays a distinctive but totally Pāla-dependent style, and it includes a discrete set of deities from an earlier Tibetan stylistic tradition that demonstrate Chinese influence on Tibetan art before the Second Propagation.

#### PUBLISHED:

Carolyn Copeland, *Tankas from the Koelz Collection: Museum of Anthropology, The University of Michigan*, Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia 18 (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1980), 76-78; Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter et. al., *The Silk route and the Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes* (Los Angeles: U.C.L.A. Art Council, 1982), 188, pl. 108.

1. Carolyn Copeland, *Tankas from the Koelz Collection: Museum of Anthropology, The University of Michigan* Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia 18 (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1980), 77.
2. See Introduction to Tibet and China.
3. This iconography is identical to that of the great *stūpa* at Barabudur, in which *dharmadhātu* Vairocana emanates the Buddhas of the five Jina Buddha *maṇḍala* on the terraces of the monument. See John C. Huntington, “The Iconography of Barabudur Revisited: The Concept of Śleṣa (Multivalent Symbolism) and the Sarva[buddha]kāya as Applied to the Remaining Problems,” forthcoming in a volume of conference papers being edited by Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke Klokke. The conference, held in conjunction with the “Divine Bronze” exhibition, took place in May of 1988. For the exhibition, see Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Marijke J. Klokke, *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A. D. 600 to 1600*, Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).
4. In East Asia it is Vaiśravaṇa who carries the *stūpa* or some kind of *stūpa*-like shrine; however, in Tibetan Buddhist iconography it is Virūpākṣa who carries the *stūpa*.
5. Significantly, no group of these figures has come to light in India proper, although there exist numbers of Indian (late Cōla style) versions in collections of Sri Lankan metal images. Whether these deities were popular or even existed in Pāla India is unknown.
6. The Lokapālas in Cave 322 for example.

ṢAḌAKṢARĪ AVALOKITEŚVARA (TIB. SPYAN RAS GZIGS YI GE DRUG PA JO LUGS; pronounced Chenrayzee yigay drugpa joluk)

Tibet, Transitional Shar mthun bris

Ca. twelfth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

Painted area H: 12 1/2" W: 8 3/4"; Borders H: 22 1/2"

W: 11 1/4"

Anonymous private collection

Illustrated in color

Throughout Asia, the Bodhisattva of absolute compassion (Skt. *mahākaruṇā*), Avalokiteśvara, occurs in more than two hundred forms, but the form seen in this painting is the archetypal aspect that is worshipped by virtually all Tibetans. Although invariably known by Tibetans simply as sPyan ras gzigs (pronounced Chenrayzee),<sup>1</sup> this particular form is more technically known as Ṣaḍakṣarī

Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs yi ge drug pa jo lugs) (fig. 51, 1). The name Ṣaḍakṣarī (literally, "six syllables") indicates that this form of Avalokiteśvara is the embodiment of the famous six-syllable *mantra* of Avalokiteśvara, the staple prayer of all Tibetans from cradle to grave: OM MAṆI PADME HŪM. The term, "Jo lugs," or "system of Jo," in the name indicates that this form of Avalokiteśvara was taught by Jo bo Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna, more commonly known as Atīśa.

Still other names for this form of Avalokiteśvara are: sPyan ras gzigs rgyal ba rgya mtsho (pronounced Chenrayzee Gyalwagyatso), the "Ocean of Victory Avalokiteśvara," and bKa' gdams lha bzhi'i nang gi spyen ras gzigs (pronounced Kadam lazangi Chenrayzee), or "Avalokiteśvara from the four bKa' gdams deities." While this latter name is found in the sNar thang "pantheon,"<sup>2</sup> which is of much later origin than the painting itself, it demonstrates the probable sectarian source of the iconography. However, there is no direct evidence regarding the sectarian origins of the painting. The teachings of Atīśa, which themselves became important in the bKa' gdams sect, apparently provided the iconographic basis.

The other figures in the painting are (see fig. 51) Amitāyus (2), Hayagrīva (3), an unidentified figure (4), Ārya Avalokiteśvara and/or Khasarpaṇa Avalokiteśvara (5), a form of Sita Tārā, probably Maṇidhārin (Tib. Nor bu 'dzin ma (6), and a form of Bhṛkuṭī, probably Ṣaḍakṣarī (Tib. Yi ge drug ma) (7).

At first examination this small painting might be taken to be a pure Pāla painting. Although the Pāla heritage of the painting is obvious, a Tibetan inscription on the reverse, some minor stylistic elements, the use of gold, and the crudity of the secondary figures reveal its Tibetan origins. Features found in both Pāla painting and its Nepali successors include the plain dark blue backgrounds with tripartite flowers, the red auras with the inner rims of luminosity, and the details of the facial features, especially the manner of rendering the eyes with a dark line under the upper lid and a red line outlining the lower lid. The same conventions used for the background and the halo behind the head of the Buddha in the Māravijaya scene in part A of an *Aṣṭasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* manuscript probably from Nālandā (cat. no. 58).

However, divergences from the known Pāla styles also occur. The rather elaborate border ornamentation, the white outlining of the petals on the lotus pedestal under the main figure, the observationally correct rainbow in the outer portion of the *prabhāmaṇḍala*, the delicate shading, and the raised impasto treatment of the jewelry are all either innovations or the appearance of otherwise lost traditions. These elements are not found in the Early Shar mthun bris paintings, and it is necessary to seek their sources elsewhere.

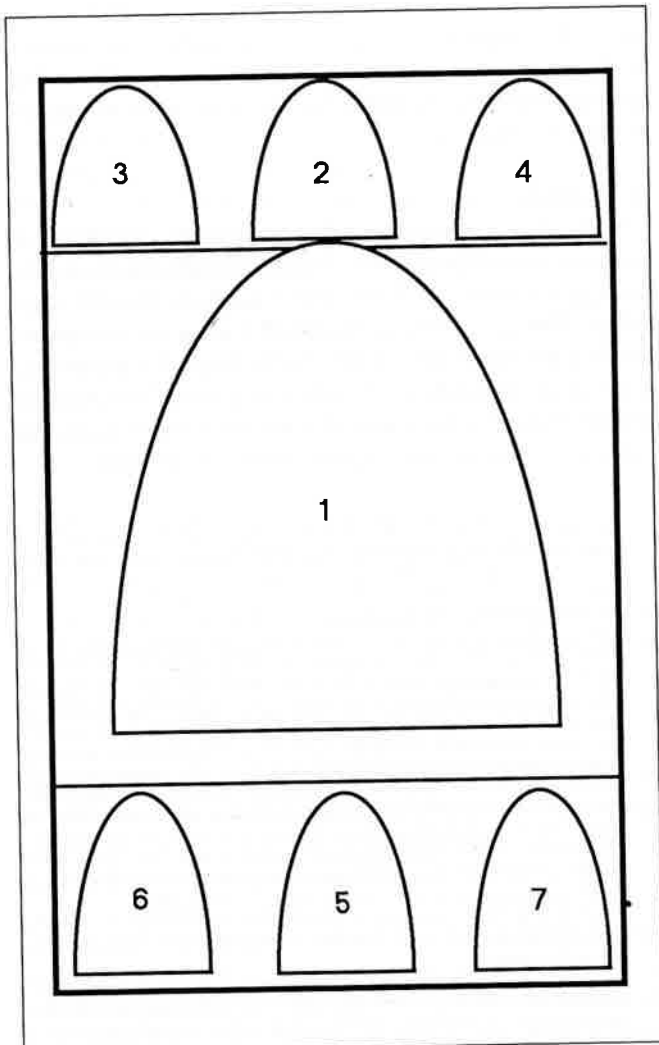


Figure 51. Diagram of cat. no. 110.



On the whole, the style of this painting is traceable to the Pāla idiom. Some of its features closely echo stylistic elements seen in the previously mentioned manuscript (cat. no. 58). For instance, the border ornamentation can be compared in detail to the decorative detailing around the string holes in the manuscript. The yellow background, the red and green gem motif; and the loose, almost scribbled, and extremely irregular red linear detailing suggest the close stylistic relationship between the two representations. The triangular throne back behind Avalokiteśvara is found in a closely parallel, but slightly more rectilinear, form behind the attendants of Prajñāpāramitā and behind the two monks listening to the Buddha's first sermon in the same manuscript. Even the infoliated detailing on the green bolster behind Avalokiteśvara has a direct parallel in the black infoliated detailing on the bolsters in the Pāla manuscript, as best seen in the panels of the miracle of Śrāvastī and the first sermon.

The technique of the painting also evidences Pāla prototypes. At first glance the shading seems more like that found in the Kashmiri style paintings of the gSum brtsegs at Alchi. However, at Alchi the shading effect is produced by thousands of tiny dry brush strokes using a darker value (chroma) of the same color (hue). A careful examination of the shading on the Avalokiteśvara reveals that the shading in it is created by a wash of two values of the same color, the lighter one overlaying the darker one. Therefore, in spite of great visual similarity, these are totally different techniques, although both are used to create an appearance of empirical three-dimensionality. However, the same Nālandā manuscript contains two sets of dark green figures—those in the panels of Prajñāpāramitā and the first sermon—that are rendered with essentially the same wash technique used on the Avalokiteśvara, although in the manuscript the colors are much more smoothly graded from dark to light. Another Pāla manuscript of the *Aṣṭasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (cat. no. 57) contains figures that are shaded in exactly the same manner as this Avalokiteśvara. (See especially the gift of honey scene in which this detail is most easily discerned.) Some aspects of the method, such as the shadow under the eyes and the highlighting along the ridge of the nose and at the corners of the mouth, are so nearly identical as virtually to demand that the painters were trained in the same school of painting.

The highlighting on the lotus petals is conventionally held to be a Nepali addition to the Pāla convention and to characterize paintings of the late thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. However, highlighting of the leaves of other plants is found in Pāla miniature paintings (see the tree in the birth scene and the mango tree in the miracle of Śrāvastī scene, cat. no. 59) and may well have been used in larger paintings as well. Therefore, this highlighting is not

necessarily a non-Pāla feature or a sign of Nepali influence.

Three of the secondary elements in the painting have not been found in Pāla manuscript painting and thus are potentially not of Pāla derivation: the raised jewelry, the rainbow around the aura (*prabhāmaṇḍala*) of the central figure, and the white highlighting on the petals of the lotus. Whether these were influences from other sources or whether they were Pāla elements that have not otherwise survived is not known. The raised jewelry would be inappropriate for manuscript painting and thus would not be expected in the extant miniatures. The raised jewelry does occur in Kashmiri painting, as seen in the murals in the gSum brtsegs at Alchi, and may occur elsewhere. If it occurs elsewhere it is undoubtedly a pan-Indian component and may not have significant bearing on the problem. If not, it may demonstrate some degree of Kashmiri influence on the painting. In the cases of the white highlighting and the rainbow, since these features are not found in manuscript illustrations, it may be that these elements were common in larger scale paintings of the Pāla idiom, or they may represent some stylistic influence yet to be traced.

The painting is clearly an example of the Shar mthun school. The use of bright colors, the raised jewelry, and the realistically colored rainbow around the aura are what place it in the Transitional Shar mthun bris category. It is the earliest known extant example of the brightly colored paintings, and except for the three elements that cannot be traced in known Pāla school paintings, it is the "purest" Pāla school example of Tibetan painting yet discovered.

The date of the painting seems somewhat problematic, but it can be fixed within about a century. As discussed above, the painting corresponds in detail to Pāla manuscript paintings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Allowing a short lapse of time between the Pāla idiom and the Avalokiteśvara painting would suggest a date no earlier than the late eleventh century. However, because of its profound closeness to a specific Pāla subschool, the artistic conception has not had time to stray very far from the Pāla context. Therefore, a date of no later than the end of the twelfth century, when the Indian schools were still active, seems likely. Somewhat crudely painted, with poorly drawn secondary figures (possibly by a second hand?) this little painting has deep roots in Indian painting and demonstrates with great clarity one of the major sources of Tibetan painting schools during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The trapezoidal blue fabric pieces at the top and bottom of the painted area are typical mountings of the early schools of Tibetan painting and like the paintings are likely to have a Pāla source. It is highly probable that most of the Shar mthun bris and Bal bris paintings in the exhibition once had similar mountings. Typically, a narrow wooden stick is placed across the top and a wooden dowel

about one inch in diameter is attached at the bottom. The top stick is usually enclosed in the fabric and the dowel is sewn into the fabric so that it extends about one or two inches from each side. The exposed ends are often painted red and are used as handles to roll the painting when it is to be stored or transported. The tie-dyed silk curtain that protects the face of the painting was added much later and is an example of the dGe lugs style of "clothing" *thag kas*.

The Tibetan inscriptions on the back are the *mantra* of the deity and the Buddhist consecratory formula (see cat. no. 1), all in *dbus can* (style "with heads") script. Unfortunately the *mantra* is almost totally obliterated because of the damage to the middle of the painting.

#### PUBLISHED:

The National Geographic Society, *Peoples and Places of the Past: The National Geographic Illustrated Cultural Atlas of the Ancient World* (Washington, D. C.: The National Geographic Society, 1983), 220.

1. Several times the author has been reminded by Tibetans to use the simple form of the name. The name "Chenrayzee" is as familiar to all Tibetans as that of a close family friend.
2. The Rin 'byung snar thang brgya rtsa rdor 'phreng bcas nas gsungs pa'i bris sku mthong ba don ldan, reproduced by Lokesh Chandra in his *Buddhist Iconography*, 2 vols. (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1987), vol. 1, 239, no. 613.

111

VAJRASATTVA AND VAJRADHĀTVĪŚVARĪ (TIB. RDO RJE SEMS DPA' AND RDO RJE DBYINGS KYI DBANG PHYUG MA; pronounced Dorjay sempa and Dorjay yingyi wongchukma) WITH BODHISATTVAS

Tibet, gTsang District, possibly from Zhwa lu monastery, Transitional Shar mthun bris  
Mid-thirteenth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 24 3/8" W: 20 1/2"

Musée Guimet, Paris

Not exhibited

Illustrated in color

The central figures of Vajrasattva and Vajradhātviśvarī (fig. 52, nos. 1 and 2) are iconographically identical to those in the example in the Early Shar mthun bris style (cat. no. 105). The pair is attended by two Bodhisattvas. To the left is a white Bodhisattva carrying a lotus who resembles Avalokiteśvara (3), while the other figure is a gold Bodhisattva reminiscent of Maitreya (4). However, the identities of these two figures cannot be confirmed since known textual sources do not list any Bodhisattvas in association with Vajrasattva and Vajradhātviśvarī. The resemblance of the Bodhisattvas to Avalokiteśvara and

Maitreya may not be coincidental, however, for these two Bodhisattvas usually attend Śākyamuni Buddha at the Māravijaya. Since it is as Vajrasattva that the practitioner is to receive his or her own enlightenment, the two figures—who may be Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya or more generalized Bodhisattvas of a similar nature—may have been included to suggest the concept of the enlightenment. The top register includes a total of six Bodhisattvas (5-10), who complete the environment of enlightenment that Vajrasattva and Vajradhātviśvarī engender. Because these figures lack distinguishing characteristics, their identities also are unknown.

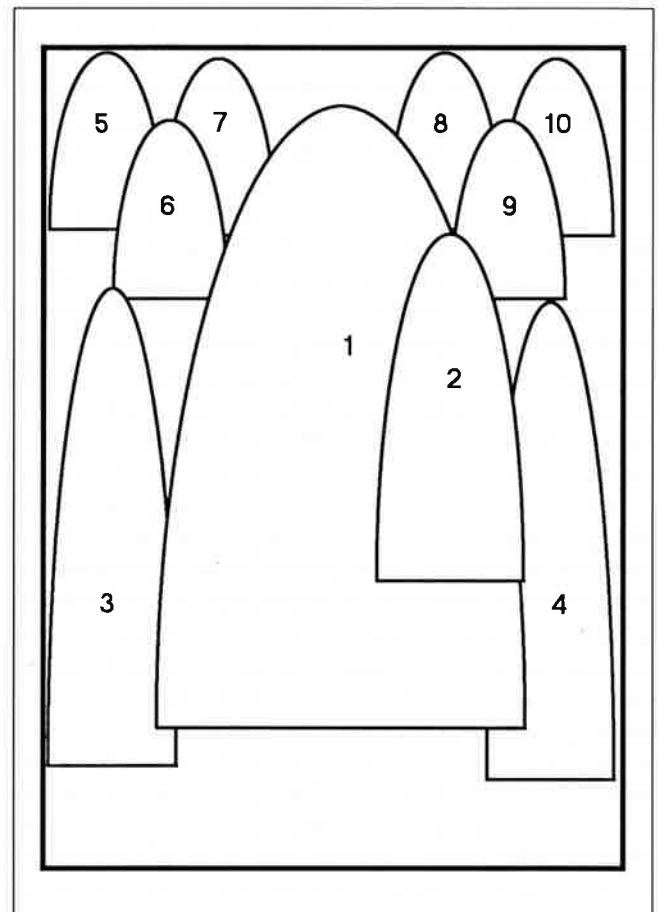


Figure 52. Diagram of cat. no. 111.

The stylistic attribution of this painting has been verified by the publication in 1986 of an obscure little volume that includes photographs of paintings in a virtually identical style.<sup>1</sup> The published examples were presented without documentation, description, annotation, or substantive comment, but were photographed by Rahula Samkrityayana during one of his stays in Tibet.<sup>2</sup> Although Samkrityayana did not mention the findspot of the paintings, it is well known that he limited his activities to the gTsang Valley and that he worked predominantly at

Ngor and Zhwa lu monasteries, where he was well received and afforded access to the books and works of art that he sought in his quest for evidence of early Indian influence in Tibet.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is possible to infer with some certainty in which monastery the paintings were found.

Although paintings and painters circulated freely throughout Tibet, at times obscuring the contours of the regional schools, there is little evidence that paintings were frequently transported once they were placed in a monastery. On the contrary, it has been my direct observation in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Tibet and Han China that once situated in a monastic or familial shrine, a painting tended to remain there. This helps to account for the fairly large horde of paintings that could accumulate in a single monastery, having been originally deposited there and not subsequently moved. If this is true in this case, then these ca. mid-thirteenth century paintings would have had to have been found in Zhwa lu, because Ngor was not built until 1429, when it was founded by Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382-1444). Thus this painting, in the identical style of the thirteenth century Zhwa lu paintings has a strong possibility of also being from Zhwa lu.

Because of their closeness in style to the published Samkṛityayana group of paintings, several other paintings now in international collections, including this painting in the exhibition,<sup>4</sup> must be assumed to have been made by artists of the same school and in relatively close chronological proximity. Therefore, it may be suggested that the paintings in question represent a distinct Zhwa lu subschool of Transitional Shar mthun bris.

Given this hypothesis and the results of stylistic analysis it is possible to arrive at a fairly detailed account of the paintings and their position in the context of Tibetan painting. Tucci originally suggested that the paintings in this style were Nepali.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently I published them as "Indian style" and related them to the Kara Khoto material collected by P. K. Koslov, now in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad.<sup>6</sup> This view has been widely accepted,<sup>7</sup> but I think that the time has come for a more precise understanding of the sources of the style and its place in the history of Tibetan painting. This painting is primarily Pāla-derived in the majority of its conventions and reflects the imagery of Bihar in much the same manner as did the Early Shar mthun bris painting of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 105). This is in part iconomorphic (the textually dictated measurements and position of the deity) and in part stylistic. Discretionary stylistic conventions such as the throne base, lions in the throne base, fabric hanging over the center of the throne base, and lotus petals all remain well within the Pāla venue. However, other stylistic features, such as the overlapping arrangement of the Bodhisattvas at the top of the painting, the accentuated degree to which the hips of the standing Bodhisattvas are

bent, and the relatively greater degree to which the standing Bodhisattvas turn in space, all suggest a modest amount of Nepali influence. The degree of Nepali influence is very small, however, because contemporaneous Nepali painting had sharply diverged from the Pāla conventions and was moving in a radically more ornamental direction.

This body of paintings represents a truly indigenized Tibetan school of painting. By this time the Shar mthun bris style had become internalized into the Tibetan cultural realm to the extent that it was no longer necessary for either Indian or Nepali painters working in the style to be present. On the contrary, while a previous Tibetan artist probably would have advertised his authentic Shar mthun bris skills, the whole idiom had become so internalized within the indigenous tradition that now it was simply a Tibetan style. This hypothesis has the merit of explaining how paintings in a virtually identical style could have come into existence at Kara Khoto in Central Asia and in Cave 465 at Dunhuang. Tibetans were known to have been widely active in Gansu and adjacent areas of northwestern China during the eighth through thirteenth centuries. Since the Tibetan province of Amdo borders on and in some areas overlaps the Chinese province of Gansu, this is a traditional Sino-Tibetan cultural interface region where Tibetans would travel and work in the ordinary course of affairs. Therefore, it is not necessary to postulate the travel of Indians or Nepalis to these regions, but simply the Tibetan practitioners of the Zhwa lu subschool of Shar mthun bris.

#### PUBLISHED:

Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949), vol. 2, 331-332, vol. 3, pl. F; (Musée Cernuschi), *Tibet: Bannière et Miniatures* (Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 1952), 25, no. 3; Odette Monod, *Le Musée Guimet: Inde, Khmer, Tchampa, Java, Nepal, Tibet, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Asie Centrale* (Paris: Musée Guimet, 1966), 238-239; Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 10, 75, no. 21; Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter et. al., *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path* (Los Angeles: U.C.L.A. Arts Council, 1982), 182. (Klimburg-Salter's attribution of this painting to "Western Trans-Himalaya" [her term for Mar yul, Zangskar, and Ladakh] is without foundation and can be disregarded.)

1. S. K. Pathak, ed., *The Album of the Tibetan Art Collections (Collected by Pt. [Paṇḍit] Rahula Samkṛityayana from the Nor, Zhalu and other monasteries in 1928-29 and 1934)* (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1986), pls. 5-7, 11.
2. While working on the Rahula Samkṛityayana collection of manuscripts, xylographs, and paintings housed both at the Jayaswal Research Institute and at the Patna Museum in the winter of 1969-1970, I was informed that several paintings originally collected by Samkṛityayana had been purchased by Giuseppe Tucci, including both the depictions of Amitāyus and Ratnasambhava currently in The Los Angeles County Museum of Art and unspecified others. Since this painting was originally part of the Tucci collection, it is even possible that it was one of the group of paintings

- originally collected by Samkṛityayana.
3. See his *Tibbat men saoya varas* (1929), *Meri Tibbat yatra* (1934), and his autobiography, *Meri Jivanyatra* (n.d.). As cited in Pathak, *The Album of the Tibetan Art Collections*, 2-3.
  4. The other paintings are the Amitāyus and the Ratnasambhava in The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (see Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Tibet: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* [Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, 1983], 134-35); two paintings in the Ernst Jucker Collection, Basel-Ettingen (See Blanche Christine Olschak and Geshé Thupten Wangyal, *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973], 53; the attribution to western Tibet by Olschak uses the term "west" in the Tibetan sense, meaning gTsang, and not in the modern sense of Mar yul or mNgaris and stands to her credit, as verified by Samkṛityayana's photographs); the Vairocana in the Bharat Kala Bhavan collection, Vārāṇasī (Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thangka Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* [Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984], pl. 8); and an unpublished painting of Amoghasiddhi in the Kronos Collection.
  5. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. 1, 331-332.
  6. John C. Huntington, *Styles and Stylistic Sources of Tibetan Painting* (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1969), 44-58.
  7. Pal, *Art of Tibet*, 134-35; Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l' Himālaya* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 75, etc.

112

TITLE LEAF FROM A MĀNUSCRIPT OF THE  
DOHĀKOŚAGĪTĪ (TIB. 'DHOHA MDSOD KYI GLU) BY  
SARAHĀ, WITH AN ILLUMINATION OF THE  
MAHĀSIDDHA ŚĀVARIPA (TIB. GRUB THOB CHEN  
ŚĀ BA RI PA)

Tibet, Transitional Shar mthun bris

Ca. thirteenth century

Water-based pigments and ink on Tibetan style paper

H: 3 1/2" W: 13"

Anonymous private collection

Illustrated in color and black-and-white

Śavaripa is one of the group of Buddhist tantric adepts known as the Eighty-four Mahāsiddhas,<sup>1</sup> many of whom figure prominently in the great teaching lineages of the tantric practices that are fundamental to Tibetan Buddhism. As a whole the group symbolizes the totality of the teaching lineages of all tantric soteriological methodologies. Most of the individuals now included in the group as it is known in Tibet and Nepal lived in the seventh through eleventh centuries, primarily in eastern India.<sup>2</sup> However, there are variant lists of Mahāsiddhas according to different traditions. Moreover, one set of paintings of a group of eighty-four, on the *dhoti* (lower garment) of Mañjuśrī in the gSum brtsegs at Alchi, dates from the mid-eleventh century and thus predates the period in which some of the Mahāsiddhas popular in Tibet actually lived. Thus, there must have existed in the Indic context either a concept of "eighty-four Mahāsiddhas" rather than a specific set of them<sup>3</sup> or a flexible set or sets that allowed ongoing revision.<sup>4</sup>

More significant than the iconology of the group as a whole are the individual Mahāsiddhas, who figure in the transmission lineages connected with specific teachings. Śavaripa was one of the main disciples of Saraha, the

author of the *dohās* in this manuscript, and thus may figure in some of the transmission lineages of Saraha's *dohās*, as his portrayal on this *dohā* manuscript would indicate.<sup>5</sup> To give a summary of Śavaripa's *nam thar*, or "tale of liberation," Śavaripa lived on the mountain called Vikrama and subsisted by hunting animals and fish. The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara saw the hunter and, having compassion for him, appeared to him in the guise of another hunter. At the meeting the second hunter boasted to Śavaripa that he could kill three hundred deer with a single arrow, and Śavaripa demanded a demonstration. The next day Avalokiteśvara took Śavaripa to a plain and showed him five hundred apparitional deer. After killing one hundred deer with a single arrow, Avalokiteśvara ordered Śavaripa to lift one of the carcasses, but Śavaripa was unable to do it. Feeling dejected at the prowess of the master hunter, Śavaripa returned to him the next day and asked to be instructed in his method. Through a series of meditations Avalokiteśvara showed Śavaripa and his wife the hell where they would be reborn if they did not give up hunting, taught them to give up meat and to generate loving-kindness for all living beings, and initiated them into the *maṇḍala*. After twelve years Śavaripa attained *mahāmudrā*. Returning to his master, Avalokiteśvara, for instruction, the latter directed the Mahāsiddha to remain in this world to benefit other sentient beings.

As direct as this story seems to be, there are several layers of meaning. Ultimately the symbolism of Śavaripa is a complex series of sexual metaphors and iconoclastic symbols used to express the tantric path to enlightenment and its methods. On one level of the twilight, or secret, language used by the tantric practitioners, hunting means to seek, and killing the deer means to free oneself from the belief in a permanent or self-subsisting ego. Śavaripa is the feminine gender of Śavara (or Śabara), the name of a tribal group in Orissa. This tribe is known for its wildness and primitiveness and thus serves in Indian literature as a symbol of forces beyond social control, while in tantric texts the Śavara tribe lends itself as a metaphor for the freedom from all constraints that is the result of self-mastery. In addition, Śavara women are usually listed among the appropriate female companions for male tantric (*sahajīya*) practitioners. The Śavara woman also symbolizes Nairātmyā (a female deity who embodies selflessness), and intercourse with a Śavara woman symbolizes the nondual attainment of *mahāmudrā*.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the exoteric narrative portrays a seeker who was attempting to destroy the hindrances to Buddhist attainment one at a time, but was not doing well and was in danger of being reborn in hell. Avalokiteśvara, appearing in a form that would appeal to the hunter, taught him how to overcome all his hindrances quickly and directly. Part of his esoteric vehicle of transformation was practice with Śavari companions, whom he visualized as female deities.



In this painting the yogi is shown dancing with two female partners on an antelope skin (a pan-Indic symbol of a yogic attainment and not a hunting trophy). As a hunter/seeker, he carries a bow and quiver of arrows, the tools of his trade. From the bow dangle the severed portions of an animal carcass, possibly a boar. In his left hand he carries a vase, presumably with which to bestow initiations. His blue dancing partner carries a dead bird slung over her shoulder, while the red one plays a transverse flute.

Stylistically the painting adheres closely to the Early Shar mthun bris. The blue background with its rain of yellow and red flowers, the red aura (*prabhāmaṇḍala*, literally, "circle of radiance"), and the simple lotus and sun-disk pedestal are all features of the Pāla idiom. The source of the Mahāsiddha convention and iconography is unknown, since no Pāla paintings of Mahāsiddhas have come to light. However, similar animated attendants appeared relatively early in Pāla painting. Other stylistic features, such as the white highlighting and the shading of the blue female, also occur in early painting but were handled in a different manner. In the previously mentioned manuscript the figures are highlighted by using less color in the lighter areas rather than by adding white.

Since Saraha's *Dohākośas* ("Treasures of Tantric Songs") are preserved primarily as bKa' brgyud texts, it is highly probable that the image and the text leaf itself were produced for a member of that sect. The text is interesting in that the interlineation in *dbus med* (pronounced umay, literally, "without heads") script gives an esoteric exegesis of the text. We can only bemoan the fact that the rest of the manuscript has been lost (or, more likely, thrown away because it contained no other paintings) in its journey to the West.

1. The number eighty-four is a metaphor for "vast number" in Indic symbolism. While the number of these tantric adepts is always conventionally listed as eighty-four, the lists vary, and there are at least ninety-four different individuals known as Mahāsiddhas in one context or another.
2. The most important text on the lives of the Mahāsiddhas is the *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti* by Abhayadatta, which was composed in the late eleventh or early twelfth century in eastern India. See James B. Robinson, trans., *Buddha's Lions: The Lives of the Eighty-Four Siddhas* (Berkeley, California: Dharma Publishing, 1979).
3. Regrettably, in spite of my having an excellent photograph of each of the Mahāsiddhas on Mañjuśrī's *dhōti*, not a single one is definitively identifiable. Therefore, it is impossible to compare the Alchi group with any of the later Tibetan groups.
4. See Shashibhusan Das Gupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, 3rd ed. (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969) for how widespread the *siddha* tradition was in India. There is little doubt that most, if not all, of the Mahāsiddhas actually lived and are not, as some authors have claimed, purely legendary. Many of them have left writings, or teachings recorded by their students, that are preserved in the Tibetan Buddhist canon. Robinson provides an extensive list of the works of the Mahāsiddhas as part of the bibliography to his translation of the *Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyus*. See Robinson, *Buddha's Lions*, 289-307. For example, there are seventeen works by Śavaripa in the bS Tan 'gyur.
5. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 867-869.
6. For more details, see the song by Śavaripa in Per Kvaerne's *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs: A Study of the Caryāgīti* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 181-182.

113

ŚYĀMA TĀRĀ (TIB. SGROL LJANG MA; pronounced Droljangma; ALSO KNOWN AS AṢṬAMAHĀBHAYA TĀRĀ AND KHADIRAVANĪ TĀRĀ) IN A TEMPLE

Tibet, Transitional Shar mthun bris

Ca. mid-twelfth to early thirteenth century

Water-based pigments on cotton

H: 20 1/2" W: 17 1/4"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund by exchange (70.156)

Shown in Dayton only

Illustrated in color

Unique among known Tibetan paintings, this exquisite painting is detailed almost beyond the limits of unaided visual examination. No matter how closely one looks at it or examines its intricacies, there is always more to be seen in the ever tinier details of ornamentation and iconography. Gem-studded ornaments (fig. 53), infoliated designs and figural representations on the architecture, iconographic

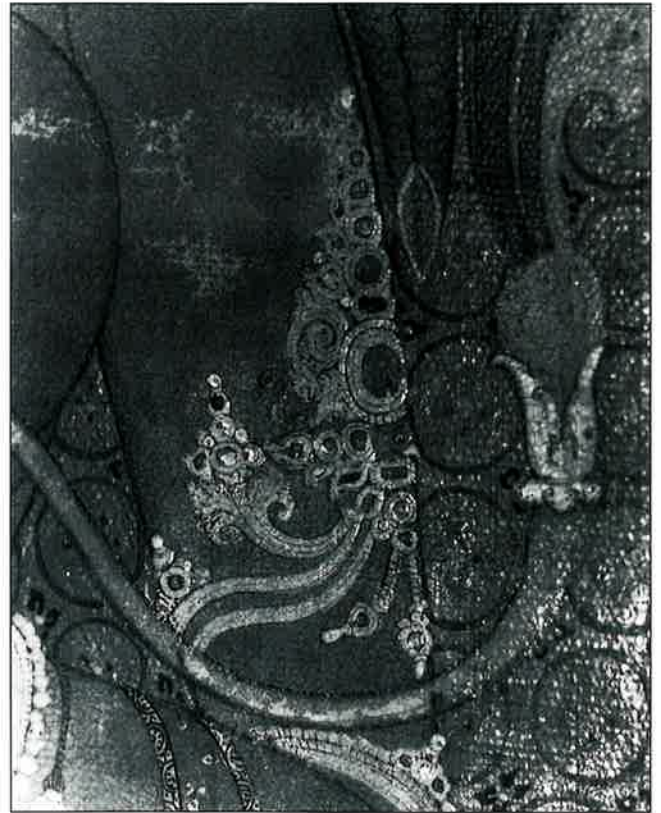


Figure 53. Detail of Tārā's left armband, cat. no. 113.

details such as the images of Avalokiteśvara with Tārā and Bhṛkuṭi, the jewels of the *cakravartin*, the eight scenes of the great perils from which Tārā rescues her devotees, and the patron of the painting are all rendered with a miniaturized exactitude that confounds the naked eye.

(See fig. 54 for a guide to these elements in the composition.) Setting aside considerations of style and iconography, simply examining the painting in detail provides an enriching visual encounter with the technical mastery, devotion, and exuberant imagination of the artist.

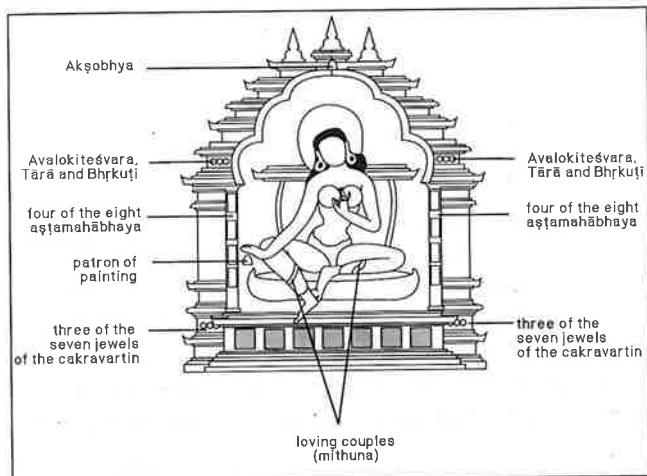


Figure 54. Diagram of iconographic elements in cat. no. 113.

Although to the casual viewer Tārā appears as if she were seated in the entryway of a temple,<sup>1</sup> the intention is that Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā is to be viewed as if one were looking through the doorframe (Skt. *dvātorāṇa*) into the inner sanctum (Skt. *garbhagṛha*) of a temple (Skt. *maṇḍir*, Tib. *lha kang*).<sup>2</sup> This convention is widespread in the Pāla idiom and may be seen in many objects in the exhibition. The fact that Tārā is seated on the lion throne and has the seven jewels of a *cakravartin* (a “wheel-turner,” i.e., an earthly king or a Buddha) below her confirms that she is represented here as Buddha. Tārā was and still is an immensely popular deity to whom many guises and functions have been attributed. When she is paired with Bhṛkuṭi and portrayed as a Bodhisattva, Tārā embodies one aspect of enlightenment, *karuṇā*, or infinite compassion. When she is conceived as the mother of all Buddhas, she embodies *prajñā*, or wisdom. However, when she is portrayed as a Buddha she embodies the totality of enlightenment and ultimately *sūnyatā* (emptiness).

The seventeen trees arrayed behind, but conceptually to the west of the temple, reiterate her universality as the mother of Buddhas. Each Buddha has a characteristic species of *bodhiṣṛkṣa* (i.e., *bodhi* tree, or tree of enlightenment).<sup>3</sup> These numerous *bodhi* trees represent the enlightenment of many or all Buddhas—the trees of all her offspring. Here, as the bestower of enlightenment and as a fully enlightened Buddha herself, Tārā takes her rightful place on the lion throne and beneath the *bodhi* trees of all the enlightened ones.

The seventeen species of trees behind the temple are so precisely drawn that their full identification is probably possible. The ones that have been identified are Śākyamuni’s *bodhi* tree, the *pīpal*, or *aśvattha*, tree (*Ficus religiosa*) (fig. 55, T5 and T10); the banyan, or *nyagrodha* (*Ficus bengalensis*) (T2); the *aśoka* tree (T3); the mango (*Mangifera indica*) (T6); and the jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) (T14). Because the tree at the top, behind the temple (T1), bears gems as fruit it may be the wish-granting *kalpavṛkṣa* tree (literally, “tree of this aeon”) of pan-Indic mythology that became assimilated with the *bodhi* tree in the Buddhist context. Others probably present are the myroblan; Tārā’s namesake, the khadira (*Acacia catechu*); and additional medicinal trees. In the background, behind the temple are at least three distinct species of palm tree.

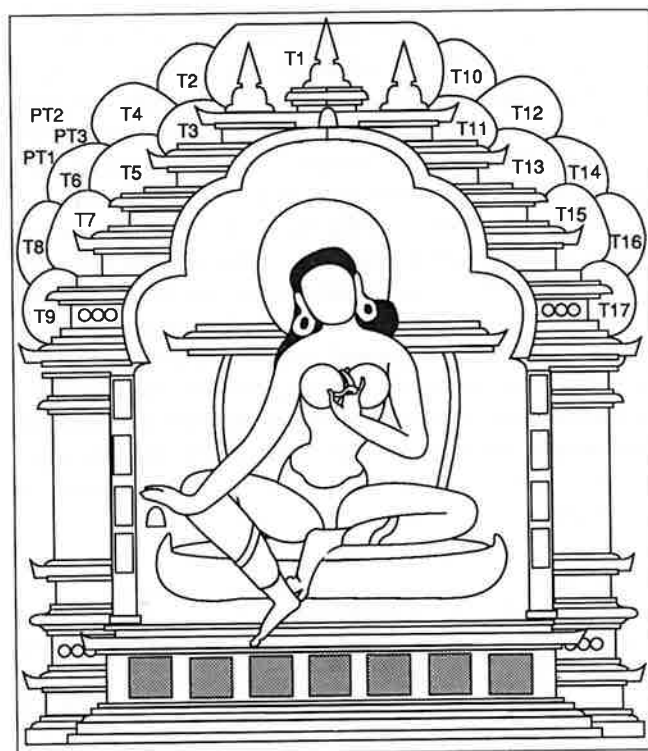


Figure 55. Diagram of trees in cat. no. 113.

Although it has been debated whether this painting is of Nepali or Tibetan origin, its Tibetan origin is clear on iconographic, stylistic, and inscriptional grounds. The monk patron beneath her right hand (fig. 56) wears a vestlike upper garment under his robes (Tib. *chos gos*, pronounced *chökō*) uniquely characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism. Moreover, the facial features and method of rendering the hair of the patron are found only in Tibetan painting. In addition, as Pratapaditya Pal has pointed out, the front-facing lions and elephants in the throne base are

more characteristic of Tibetan than of Nepali painting.<sup>4</sup> They are present in exactly the same form in the mural of Vairocana Śākyamuni on the north wall of the Lha kang So ma at Alchi, which is in the classical Pāla Shar mthun bris mode. Ultimately these frontal animals form part of the throne base of a Buddha or other Buddhist personage and constitute a Pāla motif found exclusively in the eastern Indic regions. While not appearing in exactly the same arrangement found in Tibetan paintings, front-facing lions occur in a depiction of Buddha life scenes,<sup>5</sup> and both frontal lions (cat. no. 16) and frontal elephants (cat. no. 13) may be found in sculptures in the exhibition, although the latter are usually flanked by couchant lions instead of other frontal creatures. Therefore, the combined *en face* lion-and-elephant motif seems to be a Tibetan synthesis of eastern Indian elements.



Figure 56. Diagram locating monk patron in cat. no. 113.

Ultimately, the issue of the place of origin is resolved by the lengthy Tibetan inscription on the back of the painting.<sup>6</sup> The *dbus can* (pronounced uchen, style “with heads”) inscription contains the Buddhist consecratory formula, the Tārā *mantra*, and a simple Buddhist poem in Tibetan. While it contains no names of patrons or dedications, the inscription is still very useful. It establishes beyond a doubt that the Tibetan cultural area was the place of origin of the painting. However, the issue of the origins of the painting transcends the question of its geographical place of origin and includes considerations of the nationality and stylistic training of the painter. There are three main possibilities. One is that the artist was an eastern Indian who had emigrated to Tibet at the beginning of the thirteenth century. A second possibility is a Nepali artist

trained by an eastern Indian painter. The third possibility is a Tibetan who had either travelled to eastern India or been trained by a painter from eastern India. An evaluation of these possibilities requires a detailed analysis of the painting.

Several stylistic aspects of the painting suggest a close connection with the Bengal area of eastern India. The observationally correct aspects of the depiction of the plant material, the architectural conventions of the temple, and the detailing of the throne base and structural elements of the temple illustrate either a close personal observation of the subject matter or intensive training under someone who had made such observations. For instance, none of the plants represented in the painting are found in Tibet, and many do not grow in the Kathmandu Valley. Nonetheless, the shapes and formations of the various types of leaves, the blossom-leaf configurations, and the way the mangos and the *aśoka* flowers hang are drawn in an accurate manner that strongly suggests direct observation of the plants or close adherence to a style based on such direct observation. The detailing of the temple, with the gems, infoliated and inhabited vine scrolls, and red and blue lotus petals adorning its various levels, suggests a detailed knowledge of Indic temple architecture. These traits, reflecting actual architectural and botanical phenomena of eastern India, do not allow a separation of more than a generation or two between this painting and its Indic source tradition.

Stylistically, the painting is closely tied to Pāla painting. The lotus petals in the temple with their red and blue coloration compare almost identically with similar lotus petals in Pāla manuscript painting. In addition to the Pāla elements,<sup>7</sup> there are the Nepali features in the painting whose presence initially raised the questions about its place of origin. The two most notable of these features are the *makara toraṇa* above the throne and the turned up, pointed tips of the horizontal architectural members in the temple and on the throne base and back (fig. 57). These elements are found only in the art of Nepal and its Tibetan successors. The design of the *makara prabhāvalī* (the ornate ornament arch above the throne back), with the tails of the *makaras* evolving into convoluted infoliated motifs and emitting the *nāga* tails that flow into/out of the mouth of the *kīrttimukha* face at the top of the configuration, is distinctly Nepali. These architectural elements are found throughout Nepali art of all kinds — architecture, painting, and sculpture — and in Tibetan objects based on the Nepali idiom. However the convention apparently was quite different in India, as suggested in the image of a Pāla painting of the miracle at Śrāvastī (cat. no. 59).

The strong presence of definitively Nepali features in the composition indicates that the artist, while closely trained in the eastern Indian school, was either a Nepali himself or was an immediate apprentice of a Nepali. The

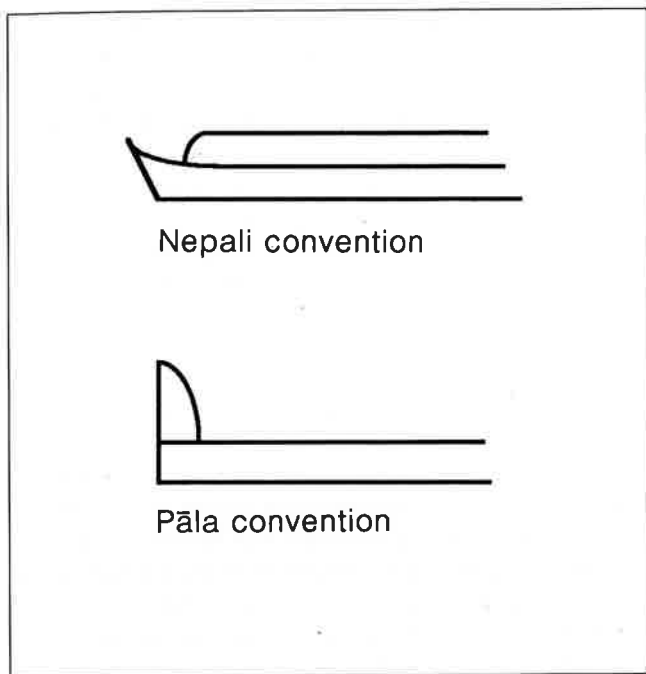


Figure 57. Drawing comparing Pāla and Nepali architectural details.

full integration of the Nepali features into the composition implies that the school that produced this painting had a period of time to internalize the Pāla elements and to integrate the Nepali elements into the Pāla compositions. All of this suggests a scenario for the rise of a Pāla-based school in Nepal and points to the beginning of the period in which the Nepalis were seen by the Tibetans as the successors to the Pāla artists themselves.

There are two possible conclusions based on this discussion. One is that a Nepali artist produced the painting in Tibet and the second is that a Tibetan painter trained by a Nepali artist produced the painting. In the first case, the Tibetan elements are within the range of what could have been accomplished by a Nepali artist. It is well established that the Nepali artists modified their approach when they did commissions for Tibetans and made every effort to copy the styles and iconography that would meet the needs of their patrons. This would account for the front-facing animals, the patron's clothing and hair, and other "Tibetan" details. In the second case, the situation would be that a Tibetan artist had integrated Tibetan elements into an already mixed style consisting of Pāla and Nepali components. While it can never be proven one way or the other, one factor does tip the balance in favor of the latter possibility. While the Nepalis excelled at miniature painting, no documented Nepali painting even approaches this painting in minuteness of detail. Yet a number of genres of Tibetan art, including stone sculpture (cat. nos. 127-130), manuscript illumination, and dedicatory

paintings (cat. no. 114), evidence a similar degree and quality of detailing. Therefore, the miniaturization found in this painting is more in keeping with the thirteenth-century Tibetan artistic milieu than the Nepali one. It is regrettable that other works of this splendid subschool have not survived or, if they have survived, have not yet come to light.

In addition to OM ĀḤ HŪM, the Buddhist consecratory formula, and the Tārā *mantra* (OM TĀRE TUTTARE TURE SVĀ HĀ), the inscription includes the following poem in four lines of nine syllables each:

*bzod pa dka' thub dam pa*

*bzod pa ni//mya ngan 'das pa*

*mchog ces sangs rgyas gsung//rab du byung ba gzhan  
la gnod pa dan//*

*gzhan la che-ba*

*dges byang ma yin no//*

The verse, which is from the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra*, is identical to that on the reverse of cat. no. 106:<sup>8</sup> "The patience that is being able to withstand the holy practice of asceticism was said by the Buddha to be the supreme *nirvāṇa*. A monk does no harm to another. He who does injury to another is no *śramaṇa*."

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Nepal: Where the Gods Are Young* (New York: The Asia Society in association with John Weatherhill, Inc., 1975), 56, 81, no. 40; Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 120, 123, no. 99; *Handbook of the Cleveland Museum of Art/1978* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 297; Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, vol. 2, *Painting* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1978), 68-69, fig. 71; Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, 2 vols. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 321, fig. 526; Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thankas Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* (Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984), 44, pl. 18; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 40-41, fig. 17.

1. Pal suggests that this painting "is obviously meant to portray a famous sanctuary of the goddess in India." See Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thankas Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* (Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984), 44. Although the practice of making replicas of famous images is known in the Pāla tradition, there is no internal evidence in this painting to suggest that it is intended to portray a specific sanctuary of Tārā in India. For Pāla examples of specific images in sanctuaries, see Alfred Foucher, *Étude sur l'iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde d'après des documents nouveaux* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1900), 189-206.
2. She is not in a *torana*, as suggested by Pal (*Tibetan Painting*, 44).
3. The eight Mānuṣi Buddhas are associated with the following trees:



<b>Buddha</b>	<b>Bodhivṛkṣa (bodhi tree)</b>
1. Vipasyin	<i>pāṭali</i> trumpet flower tree ( <i>Bignonia suaveolens</i> )
2. Śikhin	<i>pundarika</i> (or <i>padma</i> ) lotus ( <i>Nelumbium speciosum</i> Wild.)
3. Viśvabhū	<i>śāla</i> ( <i>Vatica robusta</i> )
4. Krakucchanda	<i>śirīṣa</i> "Albizzia Lebek Benth" ( <i>Acacia sirissa</i> )
5. Kanakamuni	<i>nyagrodha</i> (or <i>vaṭa</i> ) banyan ( <i>Ficus bengalensis</i> )
6. Kāśyapa	<i>udumbara</i> ( <i>Ficus glomerata</i> )
7. Śākyamuni	<i>aśvattha</i> (or <i>pippala</i> ) <i>pīpal</i> ( <i>Ficus religiosa</i> )
8. Maitreya (future Buddha)	<i>nāgapuṣpa</i> (or <i>nāgakesara</i> ) "Michelia Champaka" ( <i>Mesua ferra</i> or <i>Mesua roxburghii</i> )

4. However, not exclusive to Tibetan painting, as Pal suggests in *Tibetan Paintings*, 44.
5. S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 54.
6. I am indebted to Dr. Stanislaw Czuma, Curator of South and Southeast Asia Collections; Fredrick Hollendonner, Chief Conservator; and Bruce Christman, Conservator, at The Cleveland Museum of Art for granting me the opportunity to dismount the painting and examine the reverse. Without their generous help and cooperation this discovery would not have been possible.
7. Without a single surviving major painting from the Pāla region it is impossible to state what the paintings would have looked like with any certainty.
8. Translated by José Cabezón.

114

# CONSECRATION PANTHEON FROM A SA SKYA METAL IMAGE

Tibet, Late Shar mthun bris

Ca. fourteenth century

Silver paint and red and black ink on paper

Each about H: 1 1/8" W: 1"

Anonymous private collection

Removed from a silver image reputed represent the Sa skya Paṇ chen, these images were part of the vivifying dedicatory materials that were produced and placed inside of the image at the time of its consecration.<sup>1</sup> They were neatly arranged in carefully tied small bundles that consisted of smaller bundled subgroups. The arrangement of the images in these packages is reflected in the groupings seen in the mountings.

## I. The larger bundle

### A. package I.A

1. Vajradhara (three images)

### B. package I.B

1. Dharmapālas (three images)
  - a. unidentified
  - b. dPal ldan lho mo

- c. Mahākāla
2. an unidentified lineage (partially illustrated, 114a)
  - a. unidentified teacher (three images)
  - b. unidentified teacher (three images)
  - c. unidentified Mahāsiddha (three images)
  - d. the Mahāsiddha Luipa (three images)
  - e. unidentified teacher (three images)
  - f. Atīśa and two disciples
    - 1) disciple
    - 2) Atīśa
    - 3) disciple
  - g. unidentified teacher (three images)
  - h. unidentified teacher (three images)
  - i. unidentified teacher (three images)
  - j. unidentified teacher (four images)
  - k. unidentified teacher (three images)

## C. package I.C (the five Jina Buddhas in esoteric *sambhogakāya* form) (illustrated, 114b)

1. Vairocana
2. Akṣobhya
3. Ratnasambhava
4. Amitābha
5. Amoghasiddhi

## D. package I.D

1. unidentified teacher (thirty images)

## E. package I.E (Ḍākinīs and Herukas) (illustrated, 114c)

1. Ḍākinīs
  - a. unidentified Ḍākinī
  - b. Kurukullā
  - c. Vajravārāhī
  - d. unidentified Ḍākinī
2. Herukas
  - a. Vajrabhairava
  - b. unidentified Heruka
  - c. Guhyasamāja
  - d. Kālacakra
  - e. Cakrasamvara
  - f. Hevajra

## F. package I.F (Vajrasattva and wrathful protectors)

1. Vajrasattva
2. Wrathful (*krodhakāya*) protectors
  - a. Vajrapāṇi
  - b. Acala
  - c. Hayagrīva
  - d. Mahākāla
  - e. Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa

## G. package I.G

1. unidentified teacher (eighteen images)

## H. package I.H (Mahāsiddhas and

Bodhisattvas) (illustrated, 114d)

1. unidentified teacher
2. the Mahāsiddha Indrabhūti (?)
3. unidentified Mahāsiddha
4. the Mahāsiddha Ḍombi Heruka
5. the Mahāsiddha Luṇpa
6. the Mahāsiddha Saraha
7. unidentified Mahāsiddha (Dārika?)
8. the Mahāsiddha Kukkuripa
9. the eight Mahāsattva Bodhisattvas
  - a. Avalokiteśvara
  - b. uncertain,<sup>2</sup> (Maitreya)?
  - c. uncertain
  - d. uncertain
  - e. Mañjuśrī
  - f. Khaḍgapāṇi (or Kṣitigarbha?)
  - g. Samantabhadra
  - h. uncertain

I. package I.I (Prospering deities)

1. Vaiśravaṇa
2. Vaiśravaṇa
3. Gaṇeśa
4. Jambhala
5. Tārā
6. Ekajāta

II. the smaller bundle

A. package II. A

1. Uṣṇīṣavijaya
2. White Tārā
3. Green Tārā
4. Uṣṇīṣasitātapatrā
5. unidentified devotee or teacher

B. package II.B (Mānuṣi Buddhas)

1. Vipasyin
2. Śikhin
3. Viśvabhū
4. Krakucchandra
5. Kanakamuni
6. Kāśyapa
7. Śākyamuni

C. package II.C (Three Protective Bodhisattvas)

1. Mañjuśrī
2. Avalokiteśvara
3. Vajrapāṇi (Viśvavajrapāṇi)

D. package II.D (Vairocana, the four Mānuṣi Buddhas, and a Bodhisattva)

1. Vairocana
2. unidentified Bodhisattva (?)
3. Dīpāmkara
4. Śākyamuni
5. Maitreya
6. Bhaiṣajyaguru

Iconographically the placing of paintings inside an image of a teacher expresses the concept that the teacher actually contains all of the teachings and embodies the entire Buddhist pantheon. In many tantric meditations the practitioner visualizes his guru as emanating rays of light from every pore, that turn into the various deities. In this way the meditator is led to understand that the totality of the Dharma is contained in his own root guru and that the teacher is thus the source and embodiment and even in a sense the bestower of whatever realizations he or she seeks to attain. The silver image of the Sa skya paṇ chen that contained these images is a concrete equation of the guru (Tib. *bla ma*), all the deities, and the Dharma.

Stylistically this set of images bears a remarkable resemblance to eleventh- and twelfth-century conventions. The simple lotus bases, the triangular throne backs, and the method of outlining the figures all suggest a close relationship to paintings of the late eleventh and or early twelfth centuries. However, because the paintings were in a silver image of the Sa skya Paṇ chen (1182-1251), they have to postdate his death in 1251. Further, because silver images were very uncommon prior to the fourteenth century, it is doubtful if these paintings predate the mid-to-late fourteenth century. This date is surprising, because the Sa skya pas had developed their own version of Bal bris (see cat. no. 117) by this time and were active patrons of Nepali artists and promoters of their own schools of painting. It may be that in the context of deeply religious dedicatory practices, there was a conservative tradition that still survived in which nearly pure Shar mthun bris could be produced at will.

These tiny drawings offer considerable technical insight into the methods of painting. Plain sheets of paper were laid out into subsections where each series of figures was intended. These subsections apparently were not cut apart until all of the drawings were finished. This is ascertainable because the accuracy of cutting was not very great and often sections of the auras of figures appear in the drawings other figures. Then the area to be silvered is painted with a thin coat of white ground and apparently burnished to a hard, smooth surface. Next a coat of silver paint is applied to the grounded areas, leaving the ungrounded area as plain paper. Less than great care was used for this process, and areas where the silver went onto the paper surface are easily identifiable by close examination of the paintings. Then the silver was burnished and the red lines of the drawing applied with a stylus. Once the drawing was complete the paintings were cut into iconographic subgroups and from there sliced along lines between the figures to within about one quarter of an inch of the top edge of the section. These were then pulled apart with attendant tearing and feathering of the edges. In many cases, such as the seven Mānuṣi Buddhas, the strip can be reassembled by piecing the feathered edges

together again. In some cases the slice did not cut far enough towards the top of the strip, and when pulled apart the paper tore in an inappropriate manner (e.g. section I.B.2.j). This seems not to have mattered to the person preparing the image for dedication, since no replacements for the torn image are to be found. The whole process was essentially quick and simple, presumably taking only a few days from beginning to end, which is not surprising when one remembers that the drawings were never intended to be displayed.

#### INSCRIPTIONS:

The back of every image is inscribed with a cursively written OM ĀḤ HŪM as its vivifying or consecrating *mantra*

1. These materials were removed from the image by a somewhat unscrupulous art dealer "in search of treasures" more than twenty-five years ago. Regardless of what might be inside an image, the authors do not approve of the indiscriminate opening of images. To open an image violates the original intentions of those who made the image and those who, to this day, consider the contents to be an integral and essential part of it. The contents of an image are usually fragmentary and of little interest except in a very technical sense. Aesthetically interesting items such as these paintings are rarely encountered and only in major images. In order not to violate the religious function of the image, the only valid reason for opening an image is for conservation or repair when irreversible damage would result otherwise (e.g. bronze disease or structural damage that prevents the appropriate use or display of an image).
2. The attributes of these figures are not distinct enough to determine their identity. However, the three are from among the following: Maitreya, Kṣitigarbha, Ākāśagarbha, and Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin. Vajrapāṇi occurs in another group.

115

VAJRADHARA (TIB. RDO RJE 'CHANG; pronounced Dorjaychang)

Tibet or China (?), Late Shar mthun bris  
Postdates mid-fifteenth century, but possibly later; Ming dynasty if Chinese  
Textile of silk and metallic threads using tapestry, embroidery, and brocading techniques  
Picture H: 16" W: 12"; Borders H: 32" W: 18 1/8"  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. George E. Hibbard  
Illustrated in color

Vajradhara (Tib. rDo rje 'chang) is the Ādi Buddha (Tib. *Dang po'i sangs rgyas*, pronounced Dangpö sangyay; literally, "first, or primordial, Buddha"), according to the gSar ma schools. Vajradhara manifests the *vajradhātu*, the universal realm in which the Dharma exists in its pure and formless state, and as such is the progenitor of all teachings. Moreover, he is the essence of all Buddhas and is inherent in the state of being of all sentient beings. His color is dark blue because his essence is the infinite, spacious nature of reality. In his right hand he holds a *vajra* (Tib. *rdo rje*) scepter, symbol of indestructible compassion (Skt. *karuṇā*, Tib. *thugs rje*) and in his left hand a bell (Skt. *ghaṇṭā*, Tib.

*dril bu*) with a *vajra*-shaped handle, symbol of the transcendent wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*, Tib. *shes rab*) that directly realizes emptiness (Skt. *sūnyatā*, Tib. *stong pa nyid*). The primordial Buddha crosses his wrists in a ritual gesture known as the *vajrahūmkāra mudrā*, which symbolizes the union of wisdom and compassion in full enlightenment, or gnosis (Skt. *bodhi*).

This spectacular textile includes a portrait of a Kar ma pa (head of the Kar ma subsect of the bKa' brgyud sect) wearing the Kar ma pas' celebrated black hat. All Kar ma pas are believed to wear an invisible black *vajra*-crown, made of Ḍākinī's hair, at all times, but only beings of great spiritual attainment can actually see the true crown. The physical crown was given to the fifth Kar ma pa by the Yongle Emperor so that all sentient beings might share the vision of the crown regardless of their attainments. The portrait of a Kar ma pa wearing the black hat locates the piece within the bKa' brgyud sect and places the date after 1408/9, when the fifth Kar ma pa, De bzhin gshegs pa (pronounced Dayzhin shaygpa; 1384-1415), received the black crown from the Yongle Emperor.<sup>1</sup> By any measure this is a very late date for an image in the Shar mthun bris convention. Stylistically, the figures owe much to their Shar mthun bris heritage. However, the two triangular elements of the throne back contain curvilinear, jeweled ornamentation that can only be fifteenth century or later. Further, the *prabhāvalī* behind the head of Vajradhara contains ornamental, double S-curve elements that are unknown in pre-fifteenth-century painting.

Because it is so tightly packed, at first examination

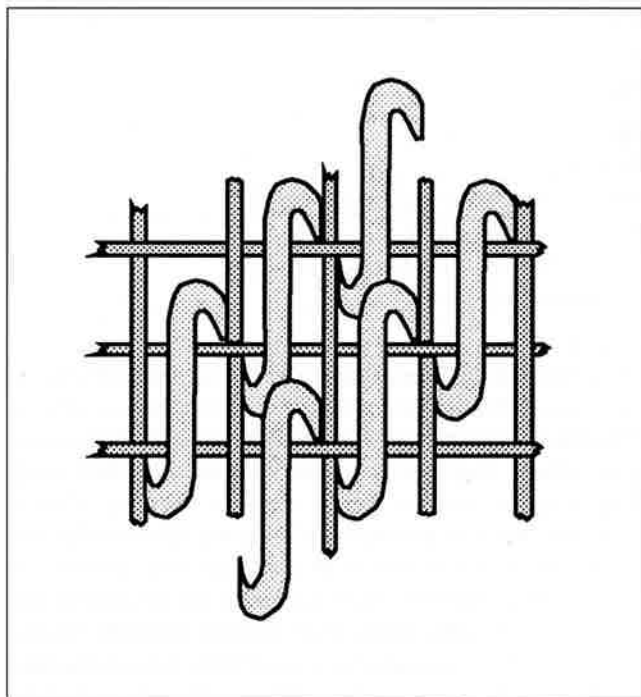


Figure 58. Drawing of structure of fabric in cat. no. 115.

the pictorial area looks as though it were a warp-faced fabric. However, closer examination will reveal that there are both both warp and weft threads running through the entire area, with the colored yarns of silk wrapped around them (fig. 58).<sup>2</sup>

This weft-wrapped tapestry has been so perfectly executed as to virtually defy belief. Not a single yarn is out of place. The gold trefoil motifs at the top and bottom of the pictorial composition are part of the same structure and are simple brocading. Details such as the faces of Atiśa, the Kar ma pa, and the lions under the throne are embroidered in a running stitch, while the outlining is formed by a wrapped outline weft that has been worked into the textile and is not, as it may appear at first glance, sewn on. It is important to note that no other Tibetan textile of this technique has yet come to light. While there is no question regarding its iconography and the earliest possible date it could have been made, its place of origin, ethnographic background, and actual date of manufacture are still unresolved.

1. Karma Thinley, *The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet* (Boulder: Prajñā Press, 1980), 74-75.
2. This conclusion must be considered somewhat tentative, because the back of the textile has been covered with a backing, so it has been impossible to examine the back.

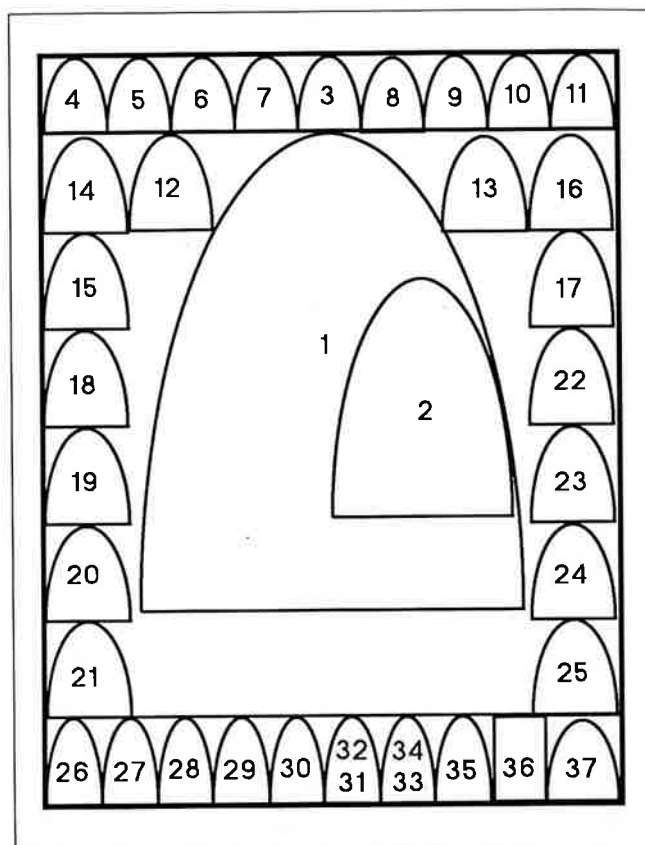


Figure 59. Diagram of cat. no. 116.

116

VAJRASATTVA AND VAJRADHĀTVĪŚVARĪ (TIB. RDO RJE SEMS DPA' AND RDO RJE DBYINGS KYI DBANG PHYUG MA; pronounced Dorjay sempa and Dorjay yingyi wongchukma)

Tibet, Early Bal bris

Fourteenth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 14 1/4" W: 12 1/4"

The Zimmerman Family Collection

Illustrated in color

Vajrasattva (fig. 59, 1), accompanied by Vajradhātviśvarī (2), is identical in conception to both of the Shar thun bris examples of Vajrasattva in the exhibition (cat. nos. 105 and 111), although here Vajrasattva is depicted in his customary color, white. The divine couple is seated, with the female deity atop the left leg of her consort. In later Tibetan representations of the pair, the couple is shown with the female facing the male in the sexually joined, or *yuganaddha* (Tib. *yab yum*), position. By the date of this painting, around the fourteenth century, it would have to be argued that the position used here is a conscious archaism. While the *yuganaddha* position is known to have existed in India and had been known in Tibet since

the eleventh or twelfth century (see cat. no. 127), images of Vajrasattva retain the side-by-side posture through this period in what is presumably a case of iconographic conservatism.

Surrounding the central deities is an array of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and prospering deities and symbols. Across the top of the painting are eight Mānuṣi Buddhas, that is, Buddhas who appear in the human realm in human bodies (4-11), with an image of Prajñāpāramitā, the mother of all Buddhas (Skt. *Buddhamātṛkā*) in the center (3). This is an intriguing group of the Mānuṣi Buddhas for a number reasons. Usually the future Buddha of the series is Maitreya (Tib. Byams pa, pronounced Jampa), but in this case it clearly is Bhaiṣajyaguru<sup>1</sup> (Tib. sMan bla, pronounced Menla) (10). He is easily identifiable by his blue color and the fact that he offers a medicinal myrobalan fruit<sup>2</sup> in his outstretched right hand. He is the Buddha of the "second future period" (i.e., the period that follows the descent of Maitreya at Ketumatī). Interest in this period is a characteristically Tibetan concern, because eschatological concerns in China, Korea, and Japan focused on Maitreya.<sup>3</sup> The other seven Buddhas also display some unusual features. Usually the seven are shown as flesh-colored, or they may be golden (the canonical color of a human Buddha); however, four of this group are given the



distinctive colors of the Jina Buddhas as well. Because of this coloration it is probable that they are intended as dual images, both as *sambhogakāya* Buddhas of the esoteric *maṇḍala* and as human Mānuṣi Buddhas. They are, from left to right, Vipāśyin (Tib. rNam gzigs)/Vairocana (4), Śikhin (Tib. gTsong gtor can)/Ratnasambhava (5), Viśvabhū (Tib. Thams cad skyobs) (6), Krakucchandra (Tib. 'Khor ba 'jigs)/Amitābha (7), Kanakamuni (Tib. gSer thub)/Amoghasiddhi (8), Kāśyapa (Tib. 'Od srung) (9), Bhaiṣajyaguru (Tib. sMan bla)/Akṣobhya (10), and Śākyamuni (Tib. Śhākyā thub pa) (11).

At the upper corners of the central frame in the composition are two small Buddhas. On the right (13) is an unusual bicolored Buddha that I have been unable to identify. The light yellow (or white) face and neck on the blue body seem to be unique in Buddhist iconography. On the left (12) is Amitāyus (Tib. Tse dpag med, pronounced Tsaypagmay), the long-life form of Amitābha (Tib. 'Od dpag med, pronounced Öpagmay). Amitāyus presides over Sukhāvati, the "Land of Bliss" (Tib. bDe ba can, pronounced Daywachen), a paradisaal Buddha-world (Skt. *buddhaloka*), or Buddha-field (Skt. *buddhakṣetra*). From this jewel-bedecked land there is no rebirth into the lower realms of the animals, ghosts, and various hells. Rather, one takes one's final birth in Sukhāvati paradise, on a lotus, in the presence of the presiding Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In this exquisitely rarefied environment the Dharma is taught, discussed, and lived (the trees, streams, and even the birdsongs proclaim it) in such a perfect manner that any being fortunate enough to be born there will realize full enlightenment in the amount of time determined by his or her merit. Amitāyus and Amitābha became the center of the widely popular "Pure Land" sects in China and especially Japan. Faith (Skt. *śraddha*) in these deities and desire for rebirth in Sukhāvati also were widespread in Tibet, apparently from at least the earliest part of the Second Propagation (mid-eleventh century), when temples dedicated to Sukhāvati Amitābha were built by the followers of Rin chen bzang po. However, no sectarian equivalent of the Pure Land sects of China and Japan developed in Tibet. Rather, the belief in salvation through rebirth in Sukhāvati remained ancillary to the more technical soteriological methodologies, although it did figure prominently in exoteric ritual and iconography. The appearance of Amitāyus in this painting is a direct manifestation of that belief.

The rest of the deities in the painting indicate that the main concerns of the patron were protection, prosperity, longevity, and well-being in this world and hereafter—not superhuman meditational feats or yogic attainments. It is quite probable that the main concern of the patron(s) was the well-being of some family member.<sup>4</sup> To either side of the central frame is a column of figures that is divided into two sections, the upper portion of which contains some of

the major Bodhisattvas of the more exoteric *kriya* and *carya tantras*. Mañjuśrī (Tib. 'Jam dbyangs, pronounced Jamyang) (14), Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs, pronounced Chenrayzee) (15), Nīlāmbādhara Vajrapāṇi (Tib. Phyag na rdo rje gos sngon, pronounced Chakna dorjay göngön) (17), and Śyāma Tārā (Tib. sGrol ljang ma, pronounced Droljangma; also in Skt. Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā) (16).<sup>5</sup> These Bodhisattvas are manifestations of their respective spiritual families (Skt. *kula*) and through the instrumentality of *kriya* and *carya tantra* rituals and meditations provide interconnecting links between the transcendental world of the Jina Buddhas and the mundane world of sentient beings.

The eight deities in the columns below this first group (18–25) are the eight great Bodhisattvas (Skt. *aṣṭamahābodhisattva*), or "eight great [spiritual] offspring who are near to the Buddha" (Tib. nye ba'i sras chen brgyad, pronounced nyayway saychengyay), who are the manifestations of the Ādi Buddha's will to aid sentient beings in their quest for enlightenment. These great Bodhisattvas may appear with any Buddha and commonly do so with Vairocana, Śākyamuni, Amitābha or Amitāyus (especially in Sukhāvati depictions), Vajradhara, and Vajrasattva. Since lists of the eight great Bodhisattvas vary and the portrayals here are not always clear enough to make a positive identification, the following list includes the more commonly occurring *aṣṭamahābodhisattvas* and their tentative identification in the painting:

1. Mañjuḥṣa (Tib. 'Jam pa'i dbyangs) (18, carries book)
2. Vajrapāṇi (Tib. Phyag na rdo rje) (? usually carries a *vajra*<sup>6</sup>)
3. Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs) (probably 25, white color)
4. Kṣitigarbha (Tib. Sa yi snying po) (probably 21, holding gem?)
5. Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin (Tib. sGrib pa mam sel) (? normally holds moon disk)
6. Ākāśagarbha (Tib. Nam mkha'i snying po) (22, holding a *viśvavajra* on a lotus)
7. Maitreya (Tib. Byams pa) (20, holds plant [*nāgakesara* flower?])
8. Samantabhadra (Tib. Kun tu bzang po) (24, blue and carries *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā* identical to Vajrasattva)

These Bodhisattvas perform the activities of the Buddha families in the mundane world of sentient beings. The one holding a sword (19) is probably a variant form of one of the above-named Bodhisattvas. Since Khadgapāṇi, "Sword-Holder," is usually an emanation of Amoghasiddhi, and Ākāśagarbha, also usually an emanation of Amoghasiddhi, is also present, there are unresolved

difficulties in establishing the correspondences between the Bodhisattvas and the *kula* lords. Regardless of the specifics of the identification and lineages of the Bodhisattvas, in general they are the active agents of the *kulas* and are present as the “answerers of prayer” for the faithful.

Across the bottom of the painting are three wealth deities (26-28), the seven treasures of a *cakravartin* (29-35), an offering array (36), and the officiant of the offerings/patron (37). The wealth deities are Mahāsuvarṇa Vaiśravaṇa (Tib. rNam sras gser chen) (26), Pīṭa Jambhala (Tib. Dzam bha la ser po) (27), and Kṛṣṇa Jambhala (Tib. Dzambhala Nag po) (28). The forms of these three wealth deities conforms to their iconography according to the Kha che Paṇ chen, Śākya Śrī. This complex of deities functions on two not entirely distinct levels. For the laity, they are the “guardians of the treasures” of material wealth and are propitiated in order to gain prosperity, although many seek prosperity because it is a supporting condition for spiritual practice in their present and future lives. To the religious specialists, these figures are primarily the “guardians of the treasures” of the Buddhist teachings and as such are propitiated for the benefit and advancement of all beings.

Following the wealth-bestowing deities are more symbols of material and spiritual prosperity, the *cakravartin saptaratna* (Tib. rgyal srid sna bdun), the seven precious articles of a universal monarch. In Indian political thought a universal monarch is a ruler who is predestined to rule all of the known world. In the life during which they will attain enlightenment, all Buddhas are born into a royal family with the opportunity to become a universal monarch or, to renounce worldly conquest in favor of self-mastery, and become a Buddha. The *saptaratna*, as symbols of royalty, have a long history in India and may predate Śākyamuni. They are a perfect minister (30),<sup>7</sup> a perfect wife (29), a perfect general (35), a wish-granting gem (Skt. *cintāmaṇi*, bestowing the treasure of the Dharma) (32) carried by a perfect horse (31), and the *dharmacakra*, the wheel symbolizing all the Buddhist teachings (34), carried by a perfect elephant (33). At the lower right corner an unidentified monk (37) makes an offering (36) to Vajrasattva. Whether this is the actual patron of the painting or an officiant making an offering on behalf of the actual patron(s) cannot be known.

This painting is of the Early Bal bris school, but that does not necessarily imply that it was painted by a Nepali artist, even though it is known that Nepali artists were active in Tibet during this time. The Nepalis had considerable artistic influence in Tibet during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, but it was not possible for them to supply a significant portion of the works of art necessary for the burgeoning religious movements in Tibet. By far the majority of works, in any

variant of the Shar mthun bris style, had to have been produced by Tibetans, who undoubtedly trained in localized schools that had founding masters in the Pāla or Nepali-influenced/modified Pāla traditions.

Although the painting is heavily Pāla-dependent, a number of elements place it clearly within the Bal bris school.<sup>8</sup> Most important is the dominance of red in the color scheme.<sup>9</sup> Although to a degree this is iconomorphically determined by the red coloration of all the auras, the selection of the color and the sheer amount of space allotted to it are distinctively Nepali. In spite of an overall appearance of lavish, rich ornamentation, the detailing itself is rendered with an imprecision bordering on crudeness that is also characteristic of much Nepali painting. These two features constitute the primary reasons for identifying the painting as Early Bal bris. However, there are a number of other factors that support the attribution as well.

The hair and crown arrangement of Vajrasattva is one of the key elements in analyzing the painting. Although it displays similarities, this crown-hair arrangement differs significantly from that of the two Shar mthun bris paintings of Vajrasattva (see cat. nos. 105, 111, and fig. 60). The triple-bun hair arrangement is more important in this context than the crown elements. The hair represents Mount Meru, at the top of which is the emergent radiance (Skt. *prabhā*; Tib. 'od) symbolizing enlightenment.<sup>10</sup> Because the hair itself is the more important part and the crown secondary to the soteriological message, the hair is less likely to undergo morphological changes. Both images of Vajrasattva in the Shar mthun style (cat. nos. 105 and 111) have double upper buns that are above the crown. However, this example of Vajrasattva exhibits a significant change. The uppermost element (red and netted, supporting a radiant gem) has become a flattened ovoid form similar in shape to the other two lumps of hair that support it. This convention is identical to the Nepali hair arrangement/crown convention found in gilt copper initiation utensils of the period. Although seemingly a minor and insignificant change in morphology, this modification suggests that this iconographic convention

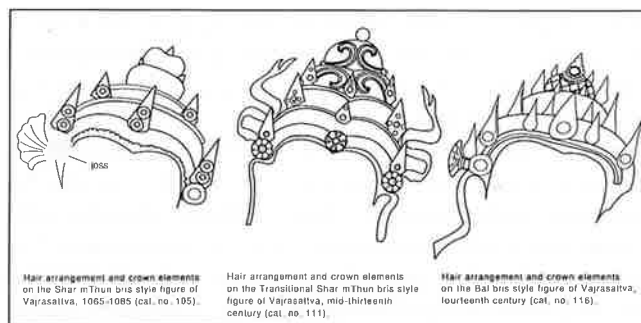


Figure 60. Comparison of hair arrangements and crown elements of cat. nos. 105, 111, and 116.

actually is not a Pāla convention at all, but one that was present in Nepal for a long enough time to undergo modifications before being transmitted to Tibet.<sup>11</sup>

Other, more incidental elements also suggest the presence of Nepali influence. For example, the long, multicolored, striped *dhoti* covering the legs of Vajrasattva is quite different from the cloth common in Pāla manuscript images (for example, see the image of Avalokiteśvara in cat. no. 58) and the Shar mthun bris paintings of Vajrasattva (cat. nos. 105 and 111). The *dhoti* here also differs from the rosette-decorated *dhotis* that cover both legs in some Indic paintings (see the image of Maitreya in cat. no. 58). Yet juxtaposed with these Nepali characteristics and nuances are many unmistakably Tibetan elements, such as the throne base; the renderings of the minister, queen, and general in the *saptaratna* group; the monk making the offerings; and even the convention of the blue and red horse. These elements are painted in an identical, equally fluent and loose manner as the rest of the painting. Close examination of the details of the facial features, auras, and hands of these figures reveals the same hand that painted the rest of the painting rather than a Tibetan assistant adding subsidiary elements to a painting by a Nepali master. Thus, it is certain that the painting is Tibetan in origin and that all the stylistic elements were integrated in the work of a single master, who, one can imagine, was aware of and probably quite proud of his skills.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Nepal: Where the Gods are Young* (New York: The Asia Society in association with John Weatherhill, Inc., 1975), 47, 49, 78, no. 29; Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 129, 139, no. 117; Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thankas Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* (Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984), 43-44, pl. 17.

1. More fully, Bhaiṣajyaguru Vaiḍūryaprabhārāja, "King Brilliant Radiance of Lapis Lazuli Teacher of Medicine (Tib. sMan gyi bla ba'i dūr ya'i 'od kyi rgyal po)."
2. The myrobalan is a powerful emetic and is used widely in traditional medicinal systems.
3. Bhaiṣajyaguru does not seem to have been important in Indic Buddhism, and only a few Pāla images of him are known. However, healing rituals centered on Bhaiṣajyaguru were very widespread and popular in Tang China and even more so in Tang-influenced early Japan. It may be that his cult in Tibet reflects Chinese influence on eighth-century Tibetan Buddhism rather than direct influence from India. Only future research into the history of Bhaiṣajyaguru will determine this.
4. There are scholars who would debate this point, maintaining that the central figure is the primary reason for producing the work of art. However, in discussions with Ladakhi and Tibetan informants, I have found that, at least among the laity, the opposite is often the case. On several types of occasions, it is the ancillary and secondary deities in paintings (who are understood as empowered by and/or manifested through the central figure) that are the real reason behind the making of a painted offering. For example, the death of a family member might cause a family to commission a painting that would include Amitāyus, the Buddha of infinite life, in the hopes that the merit gained by making the image would be transferred to

the deceased and that he or she would then be reborn in Sukhāvati.

5. For a discussion of her iconography, see cat. nos. 108 and 113.
6. In some later iconographic systems the distinction between Vajrapāṇi and Vajrasattva is blurred to the point that at times they are portrayed as identical deities simply called by different names. In the pantheon of Rol pa'i rdo rje, the well-known *sKu brnyan brgya phrag gsum* ("Three Hundred Gods"), Vajrapāṇi is identical to Vajrasattva. Whether this is intended in this painting or not is unknown.
7. Pal has identified this figure as a king, but this is impossible, because iconologically the king (i.e., *cakravartin-rāja*) can only be the central figure in a painting and none other. See Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thankas Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* (Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984), 44.
8. Pal's attribution of this painting to "Western Tibet" (*Tibetan Paintings*, 43-44) is based on a relatively vague similarity to the paintings in the Lha khang So ma at Alchi. However, the paintings in the Lha khang So ma are virtually pure Shar mthun bris as opposed to the obviously mixed Shar mthun bris/Bal bris of the present painting. Secondly, the importance of the Lha khang So ma at Alchi has been totally misunderstood. The chance survival of a related style at a remote monastery in Ladakh does not make it a regional artistic center to which other works can be meaningfully related, even in the loosest, most general way. On the contrary, what is important about the Alchi case is that it serves to illustrate that such paintings were being done in the religious centers to which such outlying regions looked for inspiration.
9. Pal also has noted red as a distinguishing feature of Nepali painting, although he does so immediately after his discussion of this painting, which, however, he simply identifies erroneously as "bKa' gdams pa style" (*Tibetan Painting*, 44).
10. This element sometimes is mistakenly identified as flame.
11. Those new to the study of Tibetan painting might feel that this is a case of the proverbial making too much of a small thing. However, in the ultraconservative esoteric tradition of Tantric Buddhism, minor variations are often the basis of major scholastic divergences. Not only is this particular hair arrangement central to the whole meditational process in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tibet, it continues in identical form to the present day. Thus, a change—any change—was serious business indeed.

#### 117

CAKRASAMVARA AND VAJRAVĀRĀHĪ (TIB. 'KHOR LO BDE MCHOG AND RDO RJE PHAG MO; pronounced Korlo demchok and Dorjay pakmo) AND THEIR MAṆḌALA RETINUE

Tibet, Tibetan Bal bris

Late fifteenth or early sixteenth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 39 1/2" W: 32 3/8"

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon (68.8.116)  
Illustrated in color

(Note: The presence in the exhibition of another version of this iconography in the mature Tibetan Bal bris idiom [cat. no. 92] provides an exceptional opportunity for detailed stylistic comparison. Those interested in such a comparison are encouraged to examine the paintings concurrently. See also Appendix II.)

Cakrasamvara and Vajravārāhī (Tib. 'Khor lo bde mchog and rDorje phag mo) in *yabyum* (fig. 61, no. 33) surrounded by their retinue of Dākinīs, heroes, and heroines, represent one of the loftiest symbols of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> Their *maṇḍala* encodes tantric practice at its most elaborate and esoteric level. In this painting the deities of the *maṇḍala* encircle the central figure. There is a teaching lineage across the top and in the corners of the main area of the

composition (a-l and m-r), in the Tibetan manner, and the eight charnal fields are arranged in two vertical rows at the sides of the composition (CF1-8). There are specifically Tibetan Dharmapālas in the central field by the feet of Cakrasaṃvara (E, F, G) and in the lower register (H, I), and a Tibetan monk/patron offers the celebratory feast of *gtor ma* (Skt. *torma*; pronounced *torma*) in the lower left corner (s, t).

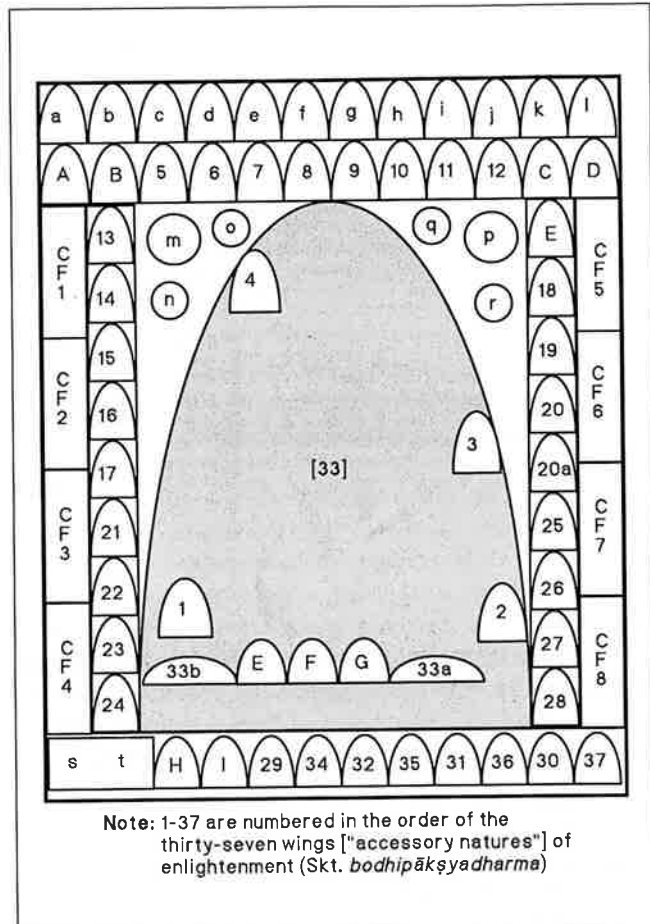


Figure 61. Diagram of cat. no. 117.

The *maṇḍala* deities are numbered according to their arrangement in Lūpa's method of visualizing the Cakrasaṃvara *maṇḍala*. However, because the deities of the retinue are not arranged in the usual circular *maṇḍala* diagram here they cannot be identified individually. Thus, the deities are identical in every aspect, and the numbers given here only serve to identify their general location. (For a *maṇḍala* in which the specific locations are determinable, see cat. no. 121.) Another *maṇḍala*, whose source I have not been able to identify, has been superimposed upon the Cakrasaṃvara *maṇḍala* in this painting. It consists of what appear on the basis of their colors to be five Jina Buddha couples, in positions to the

side of the top row of deities (A-D) and at the top of the column of *maṇḍala* figures on the viewer's right (E). They are Ratnasambhava (A), Vairocana (B), Akṣobhya (C), Amitābha (D), and Amoghasiddhi (E), with their respective female Buddha consorts. It is possible that these Buddha couples represent some variation on the iconography of the four Dākinīs of the petals of the inner lotus plus Vajravārāhī in the center.

In spite of the lack of inscriptions under the twelve figures across the top of the painting (a-l), three members of the teaching lineage can be identified with certainty. Vajradhara (f) is the Ādi Buddha and as such is the ultimate source of all tantric teachings and deities, including this *maṇḍala*. Saraha (g) is one of the Mahāsiddhas who occurs in the Cakrasaṃvara transmission lineages, as is Nāgārjuna (e). Other important Mahāsiddhas who played a major role in its early transmission include Lūpa, Ghaṇṭāpa, Kāṇhapa, Tilopa, Nāropa, and Kambala, who may be among the six other Indian teachers of the Mahāsiddha type portrayed here (b-d, h-j). Three Tibetan *paṇḍitas* dressed in Indian-style robes (a, k, l) complete the lineage. Because one of the Tibetan teachers (k) is shown with a book (a *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*) and a sword of knowledge, it is possible that he is Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), whose reforms of the bKa' gdams sect ultimately led to the founding of the dGe lugs sect. If that identification is correct, this secondary position is unusual for him and may indicate that the lineage has passed through him but is not a dGe lugs pa lineage or perhaps that this painting predates the emergence of the formal lineages of the dGe lugs sect. The other six Tibetan teachers of the lineage that appear in the sky behind the central image (m-r) also are uninscribed and cannot be identified with certainty.

A number of features of the painting are distinctively Tibetan innovations. For instance, in the Nepali Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 92), the Mahāsiddhas are depicted in the charnal fields. So far as I am aware, the Nepalis seldom, if ever, used a lineage register in compositions made for their own purposes. Accordingly, I would suggest that the lineage register is a sign of Tibetan patronage, even when a painting might be done by a Nepali hand.<sup>2</sup> Another distinctly Tibetan feature is the presence of the Dharmapālas in the lower portion of the central composition (E-G) and in the lower register (H, I): Yama and Yamarī (E), Mahākāla (F), and dPal ldan lha mo (pronounced Palden lamo) (G) appear on the lotus base under Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī, while another form of Mahākāla (H) and a second dPal ldan lha mo (I) occur in the lower register. Since the Dharmapālas are not part of the *maṇḍala* in a strict sense, the patron could choose which ones would be portrayed in accordance with his or her preferences or purposes in commissioning the painting. While the various Dharmapālas can occur in Nepali painting, they usually occur in a more formalized manner,



usually centered in the bottom register, and to my knowledge would never occur within the aura of the main figure. The portrayal of the Tibetan patron/officiant in the bottom left corner (s) follows the precedents of both the Pāla and subsequent Nepali traditions in that it occurs in the bottom register, visually and metaphorically at the feet of the deity.

While they are still surrounding the central figures and their entourage, the charnal fields (CF1-8) also present a conception that radically differs from the Nepali version. The central figure in each is one of the Dikpālas (guardians of the eight directions). Their names do not occur in the root tantra, but their names, iconography, and locations are given in *sādhana*s (practice manuals).

The guardians in the cardinal directions are:

- Indra in the east, accompanied by Indrāṇī and seated on the elephant Airāvata (CF1)
- Kubera in the north, accompanied by ? and seated on the back of a man (CF4)
- Varuṇa in the west, accompanied by a "beautiful consort" and seated on a *makara* (CF8)
- Yama in the south, accompanied by Dhūmōrṇā and seated on a bull (CF5)

The guardians in the intermediate directions are:

- Isāna in the northeast, accompanied by ? and seated on a white bull (CF2)
- Agni in the southeast, accompanied by Svāhā and seated on a ram (CF3)
- Nairṛti (or Yakṣa) in the southwest, accompanied by Devī and seated on the back of ? (usually a corpse) (CF6)
- Vāyu in the northwest, accompanied by a consort and seated on a deer (CF7)

This painting of Cakrasaṃvara is a superb example of the mature Bal bris school in Tibet. This school was by definition deeply rooted in the Nepali school, and during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there was a constant flow of Nepali artists into Tibet constantly refreshing the influence. Yet for many reasons, both iconographic and aesthetic, the Tibetan patrons dictated numerous changes. Although the Nepali and Bal bris school paintings of Cakrasaṃvara are substantially the same in general appearance, many significant differences separate the two. For instance, while the Tibetan Bal bris version continues to reflect the Nepali predominance of red, the effect has been much subdued in the Tibetan version. There is a green aura behind the red flames that has a graying effect and significantly reduces the intensity of the red. The tongues of flame are outlined in black and lack the yellow highlighting of the Nepali version, rendering the flames darker, stiffer, and more mechanical in the Tibetan composition. The background behind the aura in the

Nepali version is virtually black, while in the Tibetan version it is medium blue. Moreover, in the blue background behind the central figure, the charnal fields seen in the Nepali version have been replaced by billowing gold clouds and a rain of flowers (fig. 62). The cloud convention is a Tibetan version of what was originally a Chinese motif that had been incorporated into visual vocabulary of the Bal bris school by at least the late fourteenth century. Here it serves both to further lighten the visual effect of the background and to change the character of the visualization from the specifically tantric environment provided by the charnal fields to the more irenic, pan-Mahāyānic atmosphere provided by the rain of flowers that accompanies Buddhist events of cosmological import.

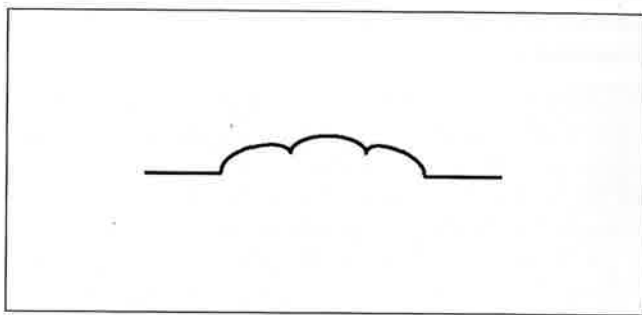


Figure 62. Cloud pattern in cat. no. 117.

The features of the faces of the central figures are much more delicate, beatific, and almost childlike in the Nepali version when contrasted to the more forceful and slightly fuller Tibetan rendition of the faces. The tapering of the lower portion of the flame aura behind the secondary figures in the Nepali painting is a widely occurring feature in Nepali art (e.g., cat. no. 94) that has been replaced by a vertically straight-sided aura in the Tibetan version.

Three basic Pāla elements survive in the painting, namely, the iconomorphic conception; the basic form and arrangement of the composition, including most of the subsidiary elements; and the general figural proportions, which remain within strict limits in the Cakrasaṃvara paintings (e.g., compare to the more corpulent appearance of the Chinese example of Cakrasaṃvara, cat. no. 125). Ultimately, paintings such as this provide a mirror, with remarkably little distortion, of the lost art of Pāla India.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, "Tibetan Religious Paintings in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts," *Arts in Virginia* 27, nos. 1-3 (1987), 50-57, figs. 10-12.

1. For further information on their iconography, see Alex Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973); Shinichi Tsuda, *The Saṃvarodaya-Tantra: Selected Chapters* (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1974); Ngör Thar rtse mKhan po, bSod nams

rgya mtsho, *Tibetan Mandalas: The Ngor Collection* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983), vol. 2, no. 62; Kazi Dewa-samdub, ed., *Shrichakrasambhara Tantra: A Buddhist Tantra* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1919; reprint, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1987).

2. From surviving Nepali sketchbooks, it is clear that Nepali artists went to great lengths to paint the iconographic programs demanded by their Tibetan patrons.

118

PAÑCAKULA HEVAJRADĀKA (TIB. KYE'I RDO RJE MKHA' 'GRO LNGA RIGS; pronounced Kyay dorjay kandro ngarig)

Tibet, Tibetan Bal bris

Ca. 1480 to 1520

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 31 1/2" W: 28 7/16"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Illustrated in color

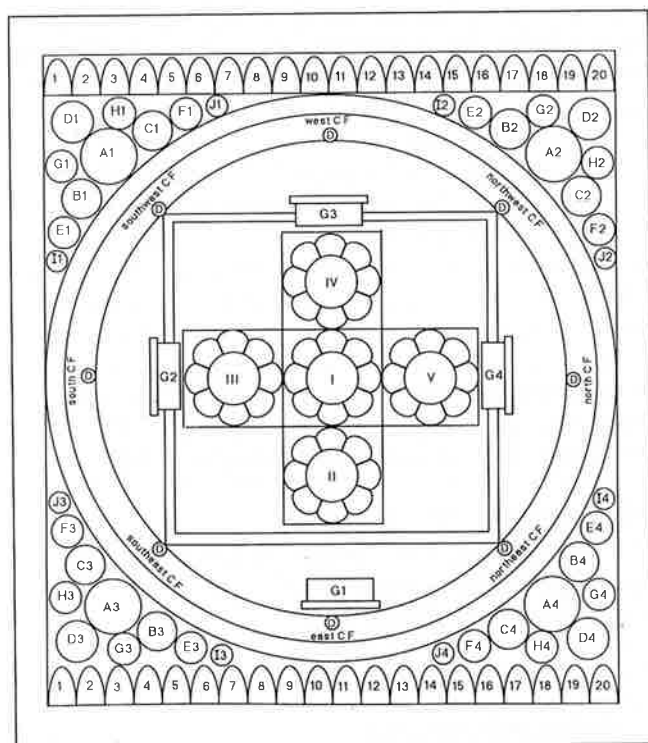
The Ngor monastery, Ngor E vam chos ldan (pronounced Ngor Evam chöden), was founded in 1429 by Kun dga' bzang po (1382-1457) as a major center of tantric learning for the Sa skyas sect. One of Kun dga' bzang po's main interests was the study of *maṇḍala* iconography described in the *tantras*. In Tibetan Buddhism in general and especially among the Sa skyas pas, Ngor became renowned as a center of tantric scholarship. Ngor is famous for the compilation of the *rGyud sde kun btus*, a compendium of *tantras* by 'Jam dbyangs blo gter dbang po (1847-1914) that

was based on the work of his two immediate teachers, mKhyen rtse bzang po (1828-1892) and Kong sprul yon tan rgya mtsho (1813-1899), and the original notes of Kun dga' bzang po. The *maṇḍalas* ascribed to the Ngor collection of *tantras* in a number of inscriptions has led curators, dealers, and collectors to posit a fictional "Ngor school" of painting that never existed in actuality.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the Sa skyas pas patronized Nepali artists and maintained a Bal bris tradition of their own, albeit one that was quite different from the Nepali tradition proper.<sup>2</sup> Whether it is called Sa skyas Bal bris, gTsang Bal bris, or simply Bal bris, it is a Tibetan interpretation of the Nepali school that was widespread from the middle or late fourteenth century well into the seventeenth century.

What did exist at Ngor and exert influence throughout Tibet was a Ngor iconographic and commentarial tradition, rather than an artistic or stylistic tradition. The full title of this painting of Hevajra is *Ngor lugs kye'i rdo rje mkha' 'gro lnga rigs bsdus pa'i lha bzhi bcu zhe dgu'i dkyil 'khor*," literally, the "condensed five-family Dāka Hevajra *maṇḍala* of forty-nine deities in the Ngor tradition." The title specifically states that a Ngor interpretation of a *tantra* (i.e., the *Dākinīvajrapañjara-mahātantrarājakaḷpa*)<sup>3</sup> is the basis of the design of this *maṇḍala*. In this sense it is appropriate to call this a "Ngor school *maṇḍala*," as long as it is understood that one is referring to a tradition of meditative techniques, rather than painting techniques.

The figures across the top (top register, fig. 63, 1-20) represent the transmission lineage of the "path and fruit" (Tib. *lam 'bras*) teachings on the Heruka Hevajra as the Dāka (male sky-goer) aspect of the five Jina Buddhas. It is considered a speciality of the Sa skyas tradition. The teachings are traced to the Indian Mahāsiddha Virūpa, whose successors included Gāyadhara. The latter travelled to Tibet where, for the astonishingly large sum of five hundred *srang* (approximately thirty pounds) of gold,<sup>4</sup> he transmitted the teachings to 'Brog mi, the official founder of the Sa skyas sect.

We can be relatively sure of the date of this painting because one of the later masters in the lineage is identifiable. Chos rje bla ma (top register 18), or Khyen rab chos rje rin po che (pronounced Kyenrab chöjay rinpochey), was the eighth abbot of Nalendra monastery (active late fifteenth century).<sup>5</sup> Because there is only one teacher after him in the formal transmission lineage, followed by a figure who presumably is the teacher who gave the patron the path-and-fruit initiations and teachings<sup>6</sup> and the patron himself (lower register 20), it follows that this painting probably dates from the very end of the fifteenth century or beginning of the sixteenth century. A conservative estimate would be between 1480 and 1520; however, in view of the fairly rapid turnover of teachers during that period, the painting is probably earlier in that time frame rather than later, i.e., ca. 1490-1500.<sup>7</sup>



The *maṇḍala* consists of five separate smaller *maṇḍalas*, each comprising an image of Hevajra surrounded by eight *Ḍākinīs*. The central one, representing the Vajrasattva family (Skt. *kula*), is Cittadāka Hevajra (Tib. Thugs kyi mkha' 'gro kye'ir do rje) embracing Māmaki (I). They are surrounded by eight *Ḍākinīs*, whose identities, in clockwise order, are:

Gaurī to the east (the lowest petal in the circle)  
 Caurī to the south  
 Vetālī to the west  
 Ghasmarī to the north  
 Pukkasī to the northeast  
 Śabarī to the southeast  
 Caṇḍalī to the southwest  
 Dombinī to the northwest

The other forms of Hevajra are surrounded by different colored versions of the same *Ḍākinīs*. Nitya Hevajra (Tib. rTag pa kye'i rdo rje), representing the Vairocana family, embracing Buddhhalocanā (Tib. Sangs rgyas spyān ma) in the east (II); Ratnarāja Hevajra (Tib. Rin chen rgyal po kye'i rdo rje), representing the Ratnasambhava family, embracing Ratna Tārā (Tib. Rin chen sgrol ma), in the south (III); Hayagrīva Hevajra<sup>8</sup> (Tib. rTa mgrin kye'i rdo rje), representing the Amitābha family, embracing Pāṇḍaravāsinī (Tib. Gos dkar mo), in the west (IV); and Aśva Hevajra (Tib. rTa mchog kye'i rdo rje), representing the Amoghasiddhi family, embracing Samaya Tārā (Tib. Dam tshig sgrol ma), in the north (V).<sup>9</sup> The identity of the various forms of Hevajra with the Jina Buddhas is confirmed by the fact that their female consorts retain the same names they have in the five Jina Buddha *maṇḍala*.<sup>10</sup>

Other figures in the *maṇḍala* proper are the gate deities, Vajrāṅkuṣā, literally, "goddess of the adamantine elephant goad" (Tib. rDo rje lcags kyu ma) (G1); Vajrapāśā, literally, "goddess of the adamantine noose" (Tib. rDo rje zhags ma) (G2); Vajrasphoṭā, literally, "goddess of the adamantine iron chain" (Tib. rDo rje lcags sgrogs ma) (G3); and Vajraghaṇṭā, literally, "goddess of the adamantine bell" (Tib. rDo rje dril bu ma) (G4). The adamantine quality of their implements implies their unfailing reliability in liberative activities. These female deities represent the ability to control or tame through vigorous means the mental hindrances that prevent further Buddhological attainment, and therefore they "guard" the doors to the *maṇḍala*, controlling access to the realm of enlightenment. Surrounding the central portions of the *maṇḍala* are the eight charnal fields (CF), each with its respective tree and Dikpāla (D),<sup>11</sup> and surrounding the *maṇḍala* are various *Ḍākas* and *Ḍākinīs* in Hevajra's retinue.<sup>12</sup> (Most of these are identified by inscription, regarding which see below.)

The complex, iconographically dictated representations of *maṇḍalas* have not proven to be fertile grounds for the discussion of style. However, a closer examination of the background details can be quite revealing. The "optional" or discretionary elements in the paintings are always done according to local, regional, or, in the later schools of painting (such as Kar ma sGa bris and sMan bris gSar ma), scholastic conventions. Some aspects of the format, such as the portrayal of the lineage register across the top and the parallel register of subsidiary and protective deities across the bottom, are also stylistic rather than iconographic conventions.

What marks this painting as Bal bris style are the details of its ornamentation and visual enrichment. For example, the division of the background of the large square of the *maṇḍala* into four colored regions—one for each of the families of the Jina Buddhas—is iconographically determined. This entire area is covered with a series of vine scrolls consisting of alternating registers of lotuses, encircled leaves, and "pearl" motifs. The ways these decorative elements are drawn and shaped are stylistically determined. The concept and general design are deeply rooted in the Pāla and subsequent Nepali traditions, wherein sweeping circular infoliations are common. However, the Bal bris artists interpreted the vine scrolls as small, tightly controlled circles, with the leaves and blossoms creating regular, repeating patterns. This treatment characterizes many Sa skya Bal bris paintings of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Another Bal bris convention is the treatment of the vine scroll roundels in which the deities outside of the *maṇḍala* are placed. These are circular enframing motifs consisting of intertwining vines. They appear to float in space against a relatively light blue ground and are separated from the ground by a heavy black outline. This feature is an indigenous Tibetan development in the Bal bris school and particularly characterizes paintings from the gTsang District (see cat. no. 119). A further characteristic of this style is the relative lack of foliage and flowers on the vine scrolls in which the figures occur. When they are inhabited by figures, vine scrolls in this tradition are generally nearly bare, being little more than circular frames for the deities and figures they encircle. Another specific convention of the Bal bris school is the form of the pillar in the arcaded registers of the lineage and protective deities. When the pillars are present, as they are in the top and bottom registers in this painting, they usually consist of a vase (Skt. *kalaśa*)<sup>13</sup> supporting a red pillar that culminates in a lotus capital supporting a bracket that in turn supports a compressed, trefoil arch. These pillars, sometimes in very elaborate versions, are often found in paintings of Sa skya hierarchs as part of the throne back or in place of a throne.

Because this Hevajra *maṇḍala* exhibits definitive

stylistic characteristics of the Bal bris school and because it is relatively accurately datable on the basis of the identification of mKhyen rab chos rje rin po che, it provides a reliable touchstone for identifying other paintings of the same school.

Lineage across the top of the painting from the inscriptions:

1. rDo rje 'chang (Skt. Vajradhara)
2. [b]Dag med ma (Skt. Nairātmyā)
3. 'Bir ba pa (Skt. Virūpa)

See cat. no. 160 for a discussion of Virūpa

4. □□ pho pa (unknown)
5. Ḍa ma ru pa (Skt. Ḍamarupa; unknown)
6. A ba dyo □i pa (unknown)
7. 'Ga' ya □□ (=Gāyadhara) (11th century)

Gāyadhara was the Indian *paṇḍita* whom 'Brog mi invited to Tibet and paid five hundred *srangs* of gold for teachings of the "path and fruit" (Tib. *lam 'bras*) and other teachings.<sup>14</sup>

8. □[']Brog mi (died 1074)  
'Brog mi lo tsa ba is best known as the translator of the *yoginī* class of *anuttarayoga tantras*, especially the *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra*.<sup>15</sup> Also noted for transmitting the "path and fruit" (*lam 'bras*) to Se ston kun rigs.<sup>16</sup>
9. Se ston kun rigs (late eleventh and early twelfth century)

Received "path and fruit" (Tib. *lam 'bras*) teachings from 'Brog mi and transmitted them to 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po (1034-1102, founded Sa skya in 1073) and Zhang gdon pa.

10. Zhang gdon pa (twelfth century)  
Transmitted Se ston kun rigs' teachings to Sa chen (Kun dga' snying po; 1092-1158).<sup>17</sup>
11. Sa skya pa chen pa (=Sa chen, Kun dga' snying po; 1092-1158)
12. Ne cho s[k?]al ston
13. rTa stag sa ba rin chen grub
14. Gan pa ston dpa
15. Gan pa chos rgyal
16. Gan pa chos rin [or rim?]
17. Gan pa rin chas
18. Chos rje bla ma  
mKhyen rab chos rje rin po che (pronounced Kyenrab chöjay rinpochoy), eighth abbot of Nalendra monastery (late fifteenth or early sixteenth century)<sup>18</sup>
19. bLa ma dpal □□
20. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]

Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs of the southwest corner:

- A1. sKu [kye'i] rdo rje (Skt. Kāya Hevajra)\*\*
- B1. dPal mchog □□□□□?
- C1. rDo rje khro bo (Skt. Vajrakrodha)
- D1. gNod mdzes [rgyal po] (Skt. Śumbharāja)
- E1. Pad [ma] mthad byed (Skt. Padmāntaka)\*
- F1. dByug sngon can (Skt. Nīladaṇḍa)\*
- G1. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- H1. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- I1. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- J1. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]

Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs of the northwest corner:

- A2. gSung [kye'i] rdo rje (Vāk Hevajra)\*\*
- B2. rDo rje mkhra' ma
- C2. Ku ru ku lle (Skt. Kurukullā)
- D2. (cannot read from photographs)
- E2. sGrol ma yongs rdzogs byed ma (?) (Skt. Paripūraṇa Tārā)\*
- F2. sTob[s] po che (Skt. Mahābala)\*
- G2. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- H2. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- I2. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- J2. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]

Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs of the southeast corner:

- A3. rDo rje dbyings (Skt. Vajradhātu Hevajra?)
- B3. bDag med ma
- C3. (unread, photograph lacking)
- D3. (cannot read from photographs)
- E3. Shes rab mtha[r] byed (Skt. Prajñāntaka)\*
- F3. (unread, photograph lacking)\*
- G3. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- H3. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- I3. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- J3. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]

Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs of the northeast corner:

- A4. Thugs [kya'i] rdo rje (Skt. Citta Hevajra)\*\*
- B4. (cannot read from photograph)
- C4. Par na sha ba ri (Skt. Parṇaśabarī)
- D4. Hūm bdzad (Skt. Hūmkāra)
- E4. gShin rje gshed (Skt. Yamāntaka)\*
- F4. Mi ga ro ba (sic. Mi gro ba) (Skt. Acala)\*
- G4. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- H4. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- I4. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]
- J4. uninscribed [Ḍākinī]

The lower register:

1. mGong po □□□□□□ (cannot read rest from photograph)
2. (cannot read from photograph)
3. sGrol ma (Skt. Tārā)
4. Sher phyin [ma] (Skt. Prajñāpāramitā)
5. rDo rje lus med
6. Ku ru ku lle
7. sPyan ras gcigs (Skt. Avalokiteśvara)



8. 'Jam dbyangs (Skt. Mañjuśrī)
9. gShin rje gshed (Skt. Yamāntaka)
10. Hūm mjad (sic. for mdzad)
11. sGrol ma (Skt. Tārā)
12. 'Ri ca (Mārīcī)<sup>19</sup>
13. □□□
14. □□□
15. 'dZam bha la (Jambhala)
16. Sang 'bran
17. Ma hā ka la (also known as Gur gyi mgon po)
18. Lha mo
19. (?)
20. uninscribed [the patron]

Inscriptions along the lower edge of the painting:

1. l□ta [lta(?)] mkhas grub bla ma pa la ldan tshul khriims kyi l
2. l□□□□□ gongs rjo gas phyir mkha' mnyam sems can kyi l
3. l kye'i rdo rje go 'phang thob □y□r phyir l
4. [mostly lost] . . . phul phyir bsong . . .
5. l bras par sby□n bdag ye shes rgyal □□□ dpal
6. bzang po . . . [5-6 words illegible in photos] . . . dan tshul can
7. ye dharmā hetuprabha□[vā] □[he] tun teṣām[for n] tathātato hyavadata l
8. (above continued) teṣanyca yo nirodha e vāmbādī mahāśramaṇaḥ || [closing mantra unintelligible]
9. maṅgalaṁ

\* From a cycle of ten *krodhakāya* deities.

\*\* I.e., body (*kāya*), speech (*vāk*), and mind (*citta*) Hevajra.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Indo-Asian Art From The John Gilmore Ford Collection* (Baltimore, Maryland: Walters Art Gallery, 1971), 54, no. 79; Pratapaditya Pal, "Tibetan Art in the John Gilmore Ford Collection," *Arts of Asia* 5, no. 6 (Nov./Dec. 1975), 61; Detlef-Ingo Lauf, *Verborgene Botschaft Tibetischer Thangkas* (Secret Revelation of Tibetan Thangkas): Picture Meditation and Interpretation of Lamaist Cult Paintings (Freiburg im Breisgau: Auum Verlag GmbH and Co. KG, 1976), 134-135.

1. The fiction of a Ngor school of painting seems to have begun with Pal's entry in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 119-120, cat. no. 138, for a small *maṇḍala* group in a mixed style. The statement was based on Tucci's statement that the painting had been collected at Ngor and his speculation that the patron, rGyal mtshan 'od zer (dates unknown), was "probably" the abbot at Ngor (Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 600). However, the painting in question is not particularly close in style to paintings that are considered to be the more typical Ngor painting convention, that is, Sa skya Bal bris up to about the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, when influence from Lhasa in the form of sMan bris gSar ma began to arrive. Tucci's statement of fact, that the *thang ka* came from Ngor monastery, appropriately became Pal's attribution, and through

no fault of Pal's, an oft-repeated "folk tale" quickly built up that the painting was of the Ngor school and that it was so stated in the inscription. The inscription, published by Tucci and Pal, contains no such statement. In a later catalogue Pal recognized the fact that the painting did not reflect the more common Nepali style found at Ngor and correctly identified Chinese elements in the painting. See Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Tibet: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, 1983), 151-153, no. P16. However, what both Tucci and Pal have failed to take into consideration is that even though it was collected at Ngor, there is no evidence that it was produced at Ngor. The issue of the patron being an abbot at Ngor cannot be taken as evidence, since it was mere speculation on Tucci's part. Even if the patron were an abbot of Ngor, it leaves the question of how a painting so different from the Ngor Bal bris paintings came to be in the Ngor collection. In fact, a painting could be transported from anywhere in the Tibetan cultural sphere and dedicated at any monastery anywhere else in the Tibetan cultural sphere (although once dedicated it was unlikely to travel again). Ngor was especially important as a tantric center, and Sa skya pas from all over Tibet would be expected to make pilgrimages there and thus to bring paintings from their own districts and monasteries as offerings.

2. See cat. nos. 92 and 117 for a comparison of the Nepali school with the Bal bris school in Tibet *per se*.
3. *Taishō shinshu daizōkyō*, ed. Junjirō Takakusu and Kaikyoku Watanabe (Tokyo: Daizō shuppan kabushiki kaisha, 1924-1934), 419.
4. A *srang* is approximately one ounce.
5. See note 18 below.
6. The *bla ma* mentioned in the first inscription at the far left of the lower margin, □ta[lta(?)] mkhas grub bla ma, is the teacher of the patron. I have not been able to identify him from any other source.
7. Even though Chos rje bla ma is known to have been at Nalendra during his later career, there is no evidence linking the painting to that monastery. Monks travelled freely, and receiving teachings from a lineage that included a given person meant no more than that the teachings had been transmitted through that individual sometime in his lifetime to the next person in the lineage.
8. Not the form of Hayagriva that is normally associated with Avalokiteśvara but a specialized form that is associated with Hevajra.
9. Ngor Thar rtse mkhan po, bSod nams rgya mtsho, *Tibetan Maṇḍalas: The Ngor Collection* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983), vol. 2, nos. 99 and 109.
10. That is, Akṣobhya is the consort of Māmaki, Vairocana is the consort of Buddhacāna, Ratnasambhava is the consort of Ratna Tārā, Amitābha is the consort of Paṇḍaravāṣiṇī, and Amoghasiddhi is the consort of Samaya Tārā.
11. See the discussion of the Nepali Cakrasaṁvara (cat. no. 92) for the names of the charnal fields and their characteristic trees. See the Tibetan Cakrasaṁvara (cat. no. 117) for list of Dikpālas.
12. For a similar explanation of Hevajra symbolism, see David L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*, vol. 1, *Introduction and Translation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959). Snellgrove's protestations against sexual symbolism are rescinded to some degree in his *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*.
13. These *kalaśa*, or urns, have a long history in Buddhist symbolism. As "vases of generation," they contain the treasure fulfilling all desires (for *Buddhological advancement*) and are widely used in tantric rituals as points of generation of the various deities and, as seen in the painting, sources of religious well-being.
14. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 112, 207.
15. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 205.
16. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 207-210.
17. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 215.
18. Since Nalendra was founded in 1435 by Rong Ston pa shes kun gzigs (1367-1457), the succession of eight abbots seems to have been fairly rapid. There were only twenty years between him and the seventh abbot (1477). The seventh abbot's tenure and a short period thereafter saw a decline at Nalendra, and Chos rje bla ma was called in and invited to become abbot by the bDag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan. This would place Chos rje sometime in the last twenty years of the fifteenth century or at the very beginning of the sixteenth century. Chogay Trichen, *The History of the Sakya Tradition* (Bristol: Ganesha Press, 1983), 30-31.
19. There is a female deity Rici who looks entirely different. Therefore, because of the chariot (of the sun, as indicated by the two wheels) and the horse (which should have been a pig), I assume that this is Mārīcī.

# SEVEN PAINTINGS FROM A TEMPLE CONSECRATION SET

Tibet, Tibetan Bal bris

Ca. late fourteenth or early fifteenth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth with silk brocade borders

Five similar size paintings are about H: 14" W: 6 1/2"

One painting is H: 8 1/2" W: 6 1/2"

One painting is H: 8 1/4" W: 7 1/4" with borders H: 15" W: 10 1/4"

Anonymous private collection

Illustrated in color

Paintings such as these typically would be hung high across the front of a temple interior and, if a set was large enough, along the side walls of the temple at the juncture of the walls and ceiling<sup>1</sup> (fig. 64). The diagram shows a break in the set to go along the side walls, but it is entirely possible that, if the temple were big enough, the set might only have been displayed across the front beam over the Buddha<sup>2</sup>. When they were hanging in their original context, the painted portion of the *thang kas* was covered with a red and white, tie-dyed silk coverlet (Tib. *thang khebs*; pronounced thankeb) that protected the painted surface. Thus, the paintings were rarely if ever visible in their original context<sup>3</sup>. The paintings are there to demonstrate the presence of the deities and, as part of the consecration materials of the temple, are necessarily present but not necessarily seen.

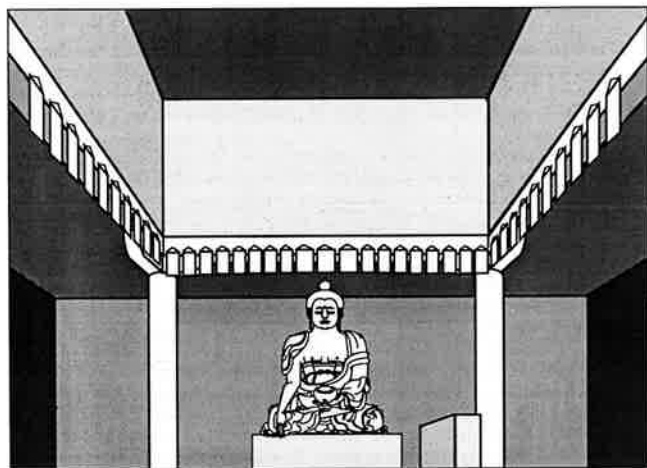


Figure 64. Placement of consecration paintings on beams of a temple interior.

In spite of their linear display arrangement, the paintings were also part of a conceptual, three-dimensional *maṇḍala*. While it has been impossible to determine exactly which *maṇḍala* was depicted, the *maṇḍala* may be partially reconstructed on the basis of inscriptions on the reverse of the paintings that provide clues to their relative locations in the *maṇḍala*. There were at least twenty-four

paintings in the set, because one of the paintings is numbered as twenty-four. It is more probable that there were actually thirty-seven, because that is the number of the most important group of deities in the yoga class of *tantras*, to which these paintings seem to belong. The numbers apparently refer to a straight, sequential counting of the total paintings in the set and do not refer to the positions of the figures in the *maṇḍala*.

The central painting of the central group, which typically would not have been numbered but would have been simply inscribed *dbus* ("center"), is missing, and it is not certain which deity it portrayed.<sup>4</sup> However, the largest of the surviving paintings shows a Buddha attended by two Arhats and is labelled, in Tibetan, "3 north." Because the subject is a Buddha, the painting must have been in the central circle of the *maṇḍala*, and in the north position as indicated by the inscription (fig. 65, 3). In addition to this Mānuṣi (mortal) Buddha in the north position, three other Buddhas in the central group probably also would have been mortal Buddhas. The usual group is Dīpaṃkara in the east, Kāśyapa in the south, Śākyamuni in the west, and Maitreya in the north. Thus, the northern image, illustrated here, would have to be Maitreya. These images may well have been identical or could show different *mudrās*, but would have had Arhat attendants and differed among themselves only slightly.

The number three for this painting makes it clear that the numbers do not refer to the positions of the figures in the *maṇḍala*. If they did, one would expect that the painting in the north position would be numbered either "5," counting the figures in the central circle in the sequence center, east, south, west, and north, or possibly "4," counting the figures in the central circle in the sequence east, south, west, north, and center. That the numbers refer to a simple counting of each of the paintings in the set rather than the position of the figures in the *maṇḍala* is further suggested by the three depictions of Lokapālas, which are numbered "4 east," "18 west," and "15 north" (the south is missing). Were the numbers to mean anything in the usual sense of circumambulating the *maṇḍala*, these numbers would have to be consecutive, or at least evenly spaced. Since neither of these relationships occurs we must discount the numbers as being indicative of position and rely on the directional statements and the iconography of the figures to determine the configuration of the *maṇḍala*. Some of the paintings (14, 23, and 24) bear a second number, although the meaning of these numbers is unclear since they do not seem to refer to positions within the *maṇḍala*.

The two paintings numbered 23 and 24 are both identified as "north", that is, belonging in the circle to the north of the central circle. The paintings represent the cycle of White Jambhala and depict Red Jambhala and Blue Jambhala. The other figures in the north circle presumably would have been White Jambhala, Yellow

Jambhala, and Green Jambhala. The subjects of the east and south circles are unknown because nothing survives from them in the collection. The west circle contains only a white image of Mañjuśrī (14), which does not provide enough evidence to determine what the iconography might have been.

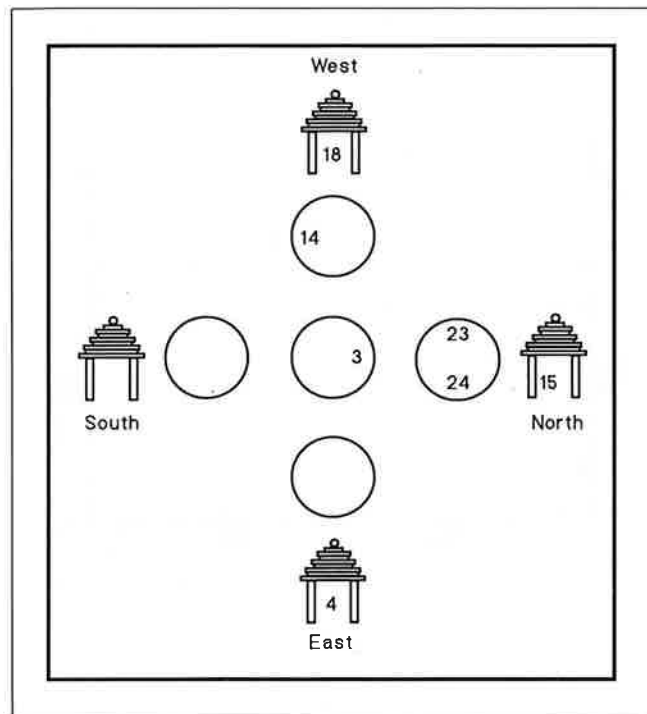


Figure 65. Positions of cat. no. 119 paintings in conceptual *maṇḍala*.

At the gates or “doors” to the *maṇḍala* are the four Lokapālas, or “world protectors” (Tib. *’jigs rten skyong*, or *phyogs skyong*). They are: Dhṛtarāṣṭra (Tib. Yul ‘khor srung, pronounced Yulkorsung), white and playing a bowed vinalike instrument, who manifests in the east (4); Vaiśravaṇa (Tib. rNam thos sras, pronounced Namtösay), yellow (shown here with an orange complexion) and carrying a mongoose and a victory banner, who manifests in the north (15); and Virūpākṣa (Tib. sPyan mi bzang, pronounced Chenmizang), red and carrying a small *stūpa* (Tib. *chos rten*)<sup>5</sup> in his left hand, who manifests in the west (18). The Lokapāla of the south, Virūḍhaka (Tib. ‘Phyags skyes po, pronounced Chakyaypo), who is blue, is missing but may be assumed to have been part of the set. These figures display their characteristic Tibetan iconography, in which their attributes have become standard conventions and from which there are only rare departures after the sixteenth century.

The positional inscriptions on the back of the paintings may be summarized as follows:

Number	Location
3	north, (Maitreya with two Arhats)
4	East, Door (Lokapāla with bowed vina, Dhṛtarāṣṭra)
14	West, two (White Mañjuśrī)
15	North, Door (Lokapāla with mongoose, Vaiśravaṇa)
18	West, Door (Lokapāla with <i>stūpa</i> , Virūpākṣa)
23	North, three (Red Jambhala)
24	North, two (Blue Jambhala)

Stylistically, these paintings exhibit similarities to some aspects of the paintings in the sKu ‘bum monastery (pronounced Kumbum) at Gram pa rGyan near Lhartse in gTsang District that Tucci described in his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*.<sup>6</sup> sKu ‘bum was founded by the Sa skya abbot sLob dpon chen bsod nams bkra shis (pronounced Lobönchen sonam tashi; 1352-1417). Tucci estimates that sKu ‘bum was built in the last half of the fourteenth century, during the twilight of Sa skya political power in Tibet. Several features of the Kumbum paintings occur in the consecration set, in particular the closely Pāla-based facial features<sup>7</sup> and the thick, dark outlining of major features. Other elements of the paintings in the set are more directly related to the Nepali schools, such as the treatment of the convoluted infoliations in the auras behind the images of Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, and the two Jambhalas. The ground under the three Lokapālas is rendered in a geometric convention reminiscent of the Pāla/Nepali school, but the shapes of the blue, black, and gold clouds behind them are nearly purely Chinese in form (but not in color). The lotus petals of the lotus thrones under the two Jambhalas and the Buddha Maitreya and the throne under Maitreya’s seat are virtually direct Pāla descendents via the Shar mthun bris school, but the lotus under the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is a wholly new type not previously seen. The petals of the flower lack the accustomed curled and convoluted tips and introduce a new Tibetan simplicity into the current elaborate Nepali style.

While some features of the set are clearly Pāla-dependent, for example, the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and to a lesser degree the two Jambhalas, both the Pāla and Nepali features have been absorbed into what can only be considered a local school with its own identity. While the artists would have considered themselves to be Bal bris painters following what we have identified as the Pāla/Nepali school of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, their paintings have begun to diverge from the tradition. The presence, albeit subtle, of Chinese elements and the addition of innovative stylistic features like the dark outline mark

this group of paintings as one of the new Tibetan Bal bris schools of painting engendered by the increasing confidence of the Tibetan artist and his consequent affirmation and assertion of his own artistic milieu.

1. This practice is still current to the present day. As recently as 1989, my friend Geshe Sopa acquired a newly made set of paintings (of different iconography) to hang in the temple at Deer Park Monastery near Madison, Wisconsin.
2. While a direct relationship, whether historical or thematic, is unprovable, it is noteworthy that the basic configuration of the "Buddha emanating the deities" configuration of a Tibetan temple is basically identical to the format of Ajanṭa Caves 19 and 26, wherein the Buddha-lokas appear to sweep out from the emanating source in the *stūpa* toward the person standing just inside the entrance of the cave. See, for example, Huntington and Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, 427 and figs. 12.7 and 12.10-12.12.
3. In the traditional environment, it is still common for paintings to be hung covered and to be viewed rarely, if ever. I have had the experience of visiting monasteries to see and photograph paintings and to have gathered an entourage of local monks who had never seen the paintings that I was asking to examine. With the possible exception of certain types of *anuttarayoga* deities, it is my impression that there is no code against looking at the paintings, but the monks rarely bother. Many of my hosts and informants have been eager to show off the treasures in the monastic collections and enthusiastic about seeing them again themselves.
4. The three probable choices are Vairocana, Vajrasattva, or Prajñāparamitā.
5. This figure must not be confused with the East Asian version of Vaiśravaṇa, who usually carries a *stūpa*. Where and how this and other iconographic discontinuities occurred is a subject of ongoing research.
6. See Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. 1, 179-187.
7. Compare the Bodhisattva in Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. 1, fig. 33, to the features of the Mañjuśrī and Virūpākṣa images in this set.

120

PAÑJARA MAHĀKĀLA (TIB. GUR MGON LCAM DRAL; pronounced Gurgön chamdral; LORD OF THE TENT, BROTHER [AND] SISTER) AND ENTOURAGE

Tibet, Tibetan Bal bris painting by a Nepali artist for Tibetan patrons

Sixteenth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 19 3/4" W: 17 3/4"

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of John Goelet (67.827)

Illustrated in color

The ultimate meaning of Mahākāla is the power and intensity of compassion that is wielded on behalf of and eventually evoked within the devotee. As the overcomer of all obstacles, Mahākāla tramples underfoot the person who represents the hindrances that arise in daily and religious life. This painting presents a Sa skya iconographic scheme. The specific form<sup>1</sup> of Mahākāla, Pañjara Mahākāla (Tib. Gur mgon lcam dral; fig. 66, 1 in central composition), is identifiable by the presence of a distinctive form of Ekajātī<sup>2</sup> (Tib. Ral gcig ma, pronounced Ralchigma), who carries a vase (Tib. *tse 'bum*) in front of her chest (2 in central composition). Pañjara Mahākāla is also accompanied by Kāmadhātviśvarī (Tib. dPal ldan lha mo 'dod pa kham gyi dbang phyug ma, pronounced Döpa

kamgyi wangchukma), one of the numerous forms of dPal ldan lha mo (pronounced Palden lamo) (3 in central composition).

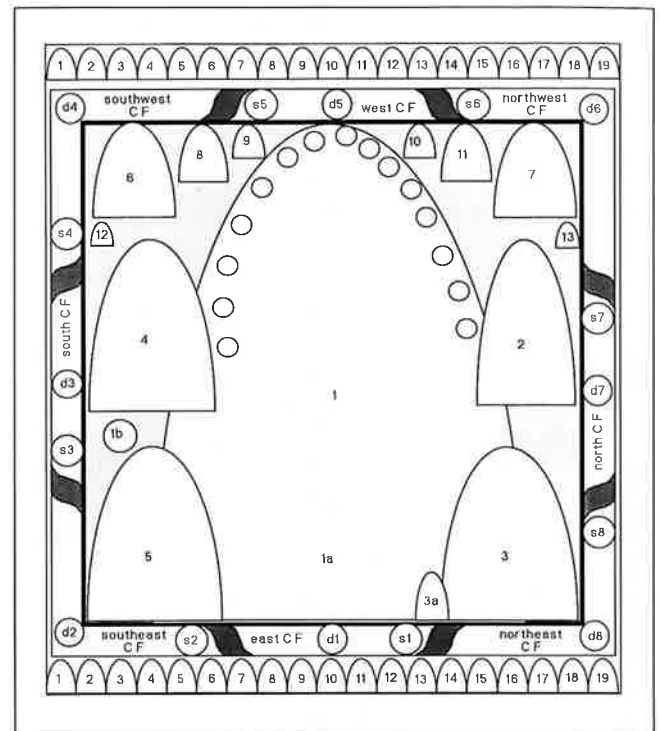


Figure 66. Diagram of cat. no. 120.

The two additional major figures in the central composition are also part of the retinue of Pañjara but are not specifically identifiable with certainty in the context of Pañjara Mahākāla's entourage. One figure (4), is a female carrying a *vajra* in her outstretched right hand and a *ghaṇṭā* in her outstretched left hand. The other two hands seem to form *vajrahūmkāra mudrā*, although this is indeterminable from the photographs and even from the original. However, the context requires that she must be a form or emanation of Mahākāla. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to make a certain identification. The lower left figure (5) is the standard form of Vajra Mahākāla (Tib. rDo rje ma hā kā la) that occurs in many contexts. These two figures could well be the "brother and sister" mentioned in the name of the central deity, but that is a tentative identification at this time.

Surrounding the central group are four of the Heruka class of deities, Cakrasaṃvara<sup>3</sup> (6), Hevajra<sup>4</sup> (7), Guhyasamāja Akṣobhya (Tib. gSang 'dus mi skyod pa) (8), Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra (Tib. gSang 'dus 'jam rdor) (11), two Dākinīs (9, 10), and two attendants (12, 13)<sup>5</sup> who are part of the general entourage. The relationship of these deities to the central figure is unknown, but axiomatically they reinforce and express the underlying strength and



power of Mahākāla and his apparently wrathful, but ultimately benevolent activities. The other figures in the central composition (1a and 3a) remain unidentified.

The central figure of Pañjara Mahākāla, who stands atop a corpse (1a), usually would carry his characteristic attribute, the '*phrul gyi gaṇṭī*' (literally, "resonant timber of magic"; Skt. *gaṇḍī*) across his bent arms. However, here the deity carries only his characteristic flaying knife and skull cup.

Encircling the head of Gur mgon po is an entourage of denizens of the charnal fields, including black birds, black dogs, black wolves, and black demons. These creatures are more commonly arrayed like a *maṇḍala* around the figure of Gur mgon po, but in this representation they have been placed in his aura. The five winged figures at the top of Pañjara Mahākāla's head are mythical birds (Tib. *khyung*; Skt. *garuḍa*) who control the beings of the serpent (Skt. *nāga*) realm and who often accompany Mahākāla. Upon close examination it appears that these figures wear attached wings rather than sporting natural wings. However, it may be that the artist attempted to depict the requisite jewelry on the "arms" of the figures, giving the appearance of "wearing" the wings, when a winged figure with jewelry on its arms is all that is intended.

The charnal fields (CF) that surround the central composition are a mixture of Tibetan and Nepali conventions. The overall format is the Tibetan enframed convention rather than the Nepali open convention seen in the Nepali early Malla period depiction of Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 92). However, the Dikpālas are portrayed in the charnal fields as they were in the Nepali example. The iconography of the Dikpālas here differs somewhat from previous examples:

- Indra, in the east, sits on the elephant Airāvata (d1)
- Agni, in the southeast, sits on a blue ram (d2)
- Yama, in the south, sits on a bull (d3)
- Nairṛti, in the southwest, sits on the back of a man (d4)
- Varuṇa, in the west, sits on a *makara* (d5)
- Vāyu, in the northwest, sits on a deer (d6)
- Kubera, in the north, sits on the back of a horse (d7)
- Īśāna, in the northeast, sits on a brindle bull (d8)

Mahāsiddhas are also depicted in the charnal fields (S1-S8), according to the Nepali convention for presenting the lineage, as seen in the Nepali early Malla period depiction of Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 92). However, most of them are easily recognizable from their standard Tibetan iconography. They are:

- Indrabhūti (?) (s1)
- Ḍombipa (s2)

- Nāgārjuna (s3)
- A flying Mahāsiddha<sup>6</sup> (s4)
- Virūpa (s5)
- Luipa (s6)
- Kukkuripa<sup>7</sup> (s7)
- Saraha (s8)

Across the top of the painting (top register 1-19) is a lineage of teachers of the practice of Pañjara Mahākāla. Because of some unfortunate damages, the very small size of the depictions, and the lack of inscriptions, only Vajradhara (1) is identifiable. Most of the figures appear to be Tibetans (6-19), while two appear to be Indian teachers (4, 5). The two remaining figures appear to be an unidentified form of Mahākāla (2) and an unidentified yellow female deity (3).

The bottom register contains the patron (1), his offerings (2), a standing Tibetan monk also apparently making an offering (3), eleven deities of the troop of Mahākāla (4-14), Mahāpīṭa Vaiśravaṇa (Tib. rNam sras ser chen) (15), two forms of Mahākāla (16, 17), another form of dPal ldan lha mo (18), and Prajñāpāramitā (19).

Stylistically, this painting represents a major development within the Sa skya Bal bris school, namely, a major influx of Nepali influence. During the fourteenth through the mid-seventeenth centuries, young Nepali artists, almost exclusively from the Buddhist Newari communities, travelled continuously to Tibet to seek their fortunes. Their work was prized and their rewards were significant,<sup>8</sup> especially during the more active periods of temple construction, for example in the fifteenth century. Their work is characterized by being up-to-date with contemporaneous Nepali stylistic developments, yet their paintings display the characteristically Tibetan iconographic elements, lineages, and inscriptions that identify the true patrons of the work. Often a Tibetan element is completely integrated with the Nepali style (for example, the image of dPal ldan lha mo in this painting), demonstrating the use of practice books wherein the Nepali artists copied and practiced unfamiliar iconographies or conventions before debuting them in their commissions.

In this painting the Nepali conventions are most visible in the treatment of the central deity and entourage (with the exception of dPal ldan lha mo) and the charnal fields. The elements that characterize the current Nepali school include the lavish ornamentation, the use of yellow in the tips of the flames, the highly convoluted billowing sashes with swallow tail ends, the increased use of red, the highlighting of the green spirals behind the Herukas, and details of the facial features on the figures in the charnal fields. At the same time, the lineage at the top and the protective deities and patron portrait in the bottom register are so characteristically Tibetan in treatment as to suggest at first glance that these elements may be the additions of

a collaborating Sa skya Bal bris painter and not by the Nepali artist at all. However, when compared to a true Sa skya Bal bris painting, the Hevajraḍāka *maṇḍala* of 1480-1520 (cat. no. 118), the facial features, rectilinear landscape elements, flames of the cremation pyres, jewelry motifs, and many other minor details reveal the presence of a Nepali hand here.

Ultimately the central image of the deity most palpably preserves the connections with its Pāla precedents. The “dwarfish”<sup>9</sup> appearance of the short, stocky body of this form of Mahākāla, the live serpents that he wears as ornaments, and many details of the overall configuration of the early Tibetan Mahākāla images relate closely to the Pāla conventions for Mahākāla. While the anatomical characteristics in the painting have been accentuated to some degree beyond the Pāla prototype, comparison with such images as a late Pāla period depiction of Mahākāla (cat. no. 27) still shows the close overall resemblance to the Pāla figural prototypes. The corpulency, squat body type, angry facial expression, snakes in the hair, flame aura, and many other minor iconological details, such as the beard, are all textually determined. However, the treatment of the detailing is left to the discretion of the artist. Thus, while the basic iconography and configuration are strictly Pāla, the details have been elaborated and varied to satisfy the aesthetic tastes of the Tibetan patrons and their Nepali artists.

1. There are at least twenty-one forms of Mahākāla, plus two or three hundred variants of the subsidiary figures. This challenging area of Tibetan Buddhist iconographics has yet to be investigated beyond the bare preliminary stages. See René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (S-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1956).
2. Also known as Ekajāṭā, Ekajāṭā, and Ekjāṭi. There is apparent confusion even among Tibetan polymaths as to whether the word is *jaṭa*, “twisted locks [of hair]” or *jāṭa*, “born,” since both variants occur. The usual Tibetan translation however, renders it as hair (Tib. *raḥ*). An additional possibility is that there are actually two nearly identical deities, one named Ekajāṭā (“One-birth”) and the other named Ekajāṭi (“One twisted lock [of hair]”); to the best of my knowledge this problem has not been explored.
3. See Appendix II and cat. nos. 92 and 117.
4. See cat. no. 118.
5. These attendants/followers (Skt. *anucara*) or servants (Skt. *ceṭa*) are essentially acolytes who serve the primary deity.
6. Several Mahāsiddhas, foremost among them Ghaṇṭāpa, have the characteristic of “sky-going,” or flying, and this figure could be any one of them. One would have to know the exact lineage being depicted before an identification would be possible.
7. The convention of the dog wrapped around his head (i.e., carried on his shoulders) seems to be unique to this painting. However, the fact that it is a dog indicates that the figure must be Kukkuriṇa, the Mahāsiddha who loved dogs.
8. See cat. no. 93.
9. This is the standard term used to describe these figures in the texts in Tibetan artistic manuals.

121

KHARAMUKHA CAKRASAMVARA MAṆḌALA (TIB. BDE MCHOG BONG [BU] ZHAL CAN LHA GYI DKYIL 'KHOR; pronounced Demchok pongbu shalchengyee kyilkor)

Tibet, Tibetan Bal bris  
Ca. sixteenth century  
Water-based pigments on cotton cloth  
H: 23" W: 18 1/4"  
The Zimmerman Family Collection  
Illustrated in color

This Cakrasamvara *maṇḍala* centers on a form of Cakrasamvara that has a donkey's face. The source of this form is the fourteenth chapter of the root Cakrasamvara *tantra*, the *Tantrarājaśrīlaghusamvara-tantra*.<sup>1</sup> The stated purpose of visualizing the deity with a donkey's face is to develop detachment from the human form of the deity and from one's own human body. The *siddhi* (spiritual or magical attainment) that results from success in this practice is the ability to see all the bodies that a person inhabited in his or her previous lives. Visualizing the deity with a donkey's face also confers another *siddhi*, namely, the ability to fly, gained by realizing the illusory nature of one's body.<sup>2</sup>

In its major iconographic features this *maṇḍala* conforms to the Cakrasamvara iconography already discussed (see Appendix II and cat. nos. 92 and 117). The major deviation from the standard iconography is that Cakrasamvara and Vajravārāhī (fig. 67, 33), and the four inner Ḍākinīs on the lotus petals closest to them (1-4) all have donkey faces, as specified by the root *tantra*. In the case of Cakrasamvara it is only his central face that is that of a donkey. Although not specified by the root *tantra*, the figures in the retinue are also shown with animal faces, perhaps as an extension of the animal-face motif. The heroes of the inner, mind circle (Skt. *citcakra*) all have *garuḍa* (bird) faces; the heroes of the middle, speech circle (Skt. *vācakra*) all have bird faces, and the heroes of the outer, body circle (Skt. *kāyacakra*) all have lion faces. This iconography probably reflects a late *sādhana*, or method of visualizing the *maṇḍala*, as does the fact that the heroes are portrayed without their customary heroine companions.

The *maṇḍala* begins with the origins of the Sa skya *anuttarayoga tantra* lineages (notably of Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Vajrayoginī), namely, Vajradhara (A), the *yi dam* Nairātmyā (B), and the Mahāsiddha Virūpa (K). The rest of the lineage is unidentifiable because of the lack of inscriptive evidence. However, it is quite likely that the balding, gray-haired figure in the white robes (N) is Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092-1158). The robes worn by the offering masters (S, V) and the patron/officiant (W) are those of the Sa skya sect.

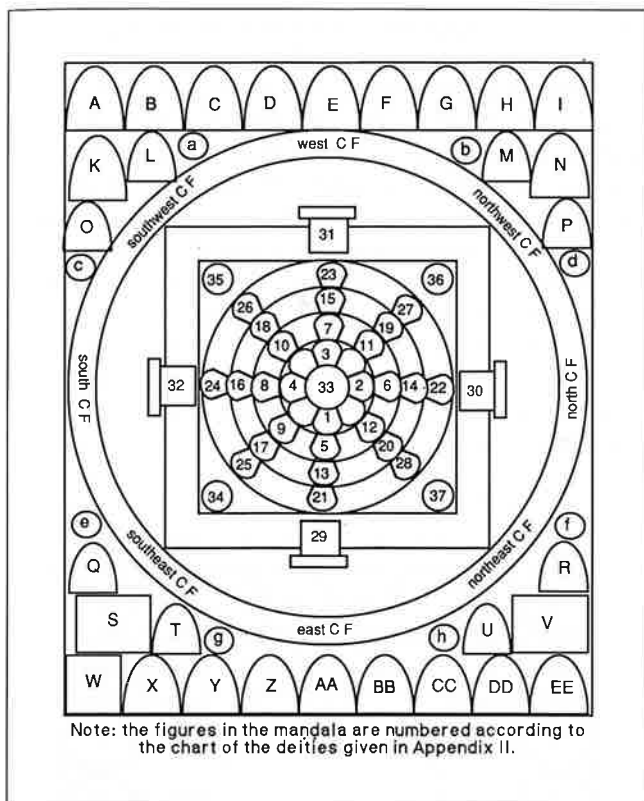


Figure 67. Diagram of cat. no. 121.

At the bottom, on the viewer's right, are the favored Dharmapālas and tutelaries of the patron of the painting: Uṣṇīṣavijayā (Tib. gTug tor rnam rgyal) (BB), Nāgārjunakrama Caturbhuja Mahākāla (Tib. mGon po phyag bzhi pa klu sgrub lugs) (CC), Pañjara Nātha (Tib. Gur gyi mgon po) (DD), and Kurukullā (Tib. Ku ru ku la) (EE).

Around the *maṇḍala* are the eight charnal fields (CF), each of which also bears a figure of one of the eight Dikpālas.<sup>3</sup> This painting is one of the earliest known examples of portraying the charnal fields in the outer ring of the *maṇḍala*. The charnal fields are replete with scavengers like vultures and hyenas, corpses, scattered bones and entrails, and meditating yogis. The cheerful, whimsical, even gleeful treatment of these morbid and gruesome subjects became a common, if not standard, feature of *maṇḍalas* painted during and after the sixteenth century.

Another noteworthy feature of this painting is the *aṣṭamaṅgala*, or eight auspicious signs (Tib. *bkra shis rtags brgyad*, pronounced tashi tagyay) arrayed around the *maṇḍala* (a-h). While long depicted in sculpture and architectural decoration, the *aṣṭamaṅgala* seems to have become an important part of *thang ka* painting during the sixteenth century. These auspicious objects are gifts that are offered to Buddhas by the eight gods of Trāyastriṃśa

and Brahmā when they request a Buddha to teach the Dharma. These objects are the special insignia of a teaching Buddha and may be displayed wherever the Dharma is to be taught. The *aṣṭamaṅgala* are:<sup>4</sup>



*dharmacakra* (Tib. *chos 'khor lo*, pronounced chökorlo), the golden wheel of the law (g), which Brahmā offers.



*dakṣiṇāvarta śaṅkha* (Tib. *dung dkar gyas 'khyil*, pronounced dongkar gyaykyil), the right-turning white conch shell (d), which Indra offers. Conceived as a loud, resonant trumpet, it symbolizes the fame of the great teachers and proclaims the Dharma.



*chatratratna* (Tib. *rin chen gdugs*, pronounced rinchenduk), the precious, or jeweled, umbrella canopy (a) that shelters beings from all evil.



*suvarṇamatsya* (Tib. *gser gyi nya*, pronounced sergyinya), the pair of golden fish (f), which symbolizes that all beings will be saved from the vast ocean of *saṃsāra*, or worldly existence.



*padma* (Tib. *padma bzang po*, pronounced padmazangpo), the lotus (e), which symbolizes the original condition of transcendent purity.



*dhvaja* (Tib. *mchog gyi rgyal mtshan*, pronounced chökyi gyeeltsen), the victory banner (c), which symbolizes victory in the soteriological quest.



*kalaśa* or *amṛtalaśa* (Tib. *gter chen bum pa*, pronounced terchenbumpa), the vase of great treasures (b), which contains the great treasures of Buddhist doctrine and practice<sup>5</sup>. *Amṛtalaśa* specifically means a vase containing the nectar of immortality.



*granthi*, or *śrīvatsa* (Tib. *dpal gyi be'u*, pronounced palgyibyu), the endless knot (h), symbolizing the interlocking networks of empathy created by love and compassion.

These objects, in addition to being generally auspicious, specifically create the proper environment for a Buddha. Their presence indicates that a Buddha is present and that the Buddhist Dharma is being, or will be, proclaimed.

Stylistically, this painting represents a direct continuation of the treatments and conventions found in the slightly earlier Cakrasaṃvara (cat. no. 117). The painting exemplifies the final culmination of the Bal bris style under Sa skya patronage. It was produced on the eve of the major influx of Chinese influence that was to shape the school, as

suggested by the presence of Chinese-style clouds (e.g., between A and B, B and C, C and D). The light blue background was created by using only the "first float" of the lapis lazuli being ground for pigment, a costly process that reflects wealthy patronage rather than a stylistic choice. The single most notable stylistic feature is the diversity and lifelikeness of the portraiture of the lineage teachers. While it is likely that the portraits are basically idealistic and conventional rather than realistic, it is also probable that the portrayals of some of the more recent teachers are based to some degree on their actual appearance. This painting dates from the transitional moment that saw the virtual end of the system of Nepali artists coming to Tibet to produce paintings for Tibetan patrons. At this time the local Tibetan schools of art had gained sufficient expertise, confidence, and numbers of artists to meet the Tibetan artistic demands. Indeed, the proficiency of the Tibetan artists allowed the innovations and stylistic transformations that set in motion the sixteenth-century proliferation of new artistic schools in the Tibetan cultural regions of Asia.

#### PUBLISHED:

Robert E. Fisher, *Mystics and Mandalas: Bronzes and Paintings of Tibet and Nepal* (Redlands, Calif.: University of Redlands, 1974), 8, 19, no. 11.

1. *Taishō shinshu daizōkyō*, ed. Junjirō Takakusu and Kaikyoku Watanabe (Tokyo: Daizō shuppan kabushiki kaisha, 1924-1934), 368.
2. Summary of chap. 14 of the Cakrasaṃvara root *tantra* provided by Miranda Shaw.
3. Working from photographs, I have not been able to confirm the identity of the Dikpālas in this painting. For their normal positions, see cat. no. 117.
4. The symbols shown here are not drawn from those in the painting but are based on *aṣṭamaṅgala* designs found on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Tibetan coins.
5. This is characteristically a vase of generation from which the deities are envisioned as emerging during various meditations. Thus it literally contains the whole of the Buddhist Dharma.

122

#### UNIDENTIFIED TEACHER (PORTRAIT OF A "ROOT GURU" WITH ORDINATION LINEAGE)

Tibet. bKa' brgyud sect (?), sMan bris (?), possibly Byang lugs subschool

Ca. mid-to-late fifteenth or early sixteenth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 14 7/8" W: 11 5/8"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Illustrated in color

Nowhere in the Tibetan Buddhist world is there a clearer statement of the teacher-as-Buddha than this portrait of a hierarch. The main figure (fig. 68, 1) is seated on the throne characteristic of Buddhas and other Buddhist deities. The

throne also supports the lotuses upon which two Bodhisattvas stand as attendants to the main figure. Symbolizing the two components of the *bodhi* (enlightenment) attained by the teacher in the center, the white Bodhisattva (2) embodies *karuṇā* (infinite compassion), while the red Bodhisattva (3) personifies *prajñā* (transcendent wisdom). The equivalence intended could not be more straightforward—the teacher is identical to the Buddhas because he or she, like the Buddhas, offers the Dharma, the means to attain liberation and to liberate others. This equivalence must be held true by the disciple, regardless of the teacher's actual status in the quest for enlightenment, and in all actions the disciple must act accordingly.

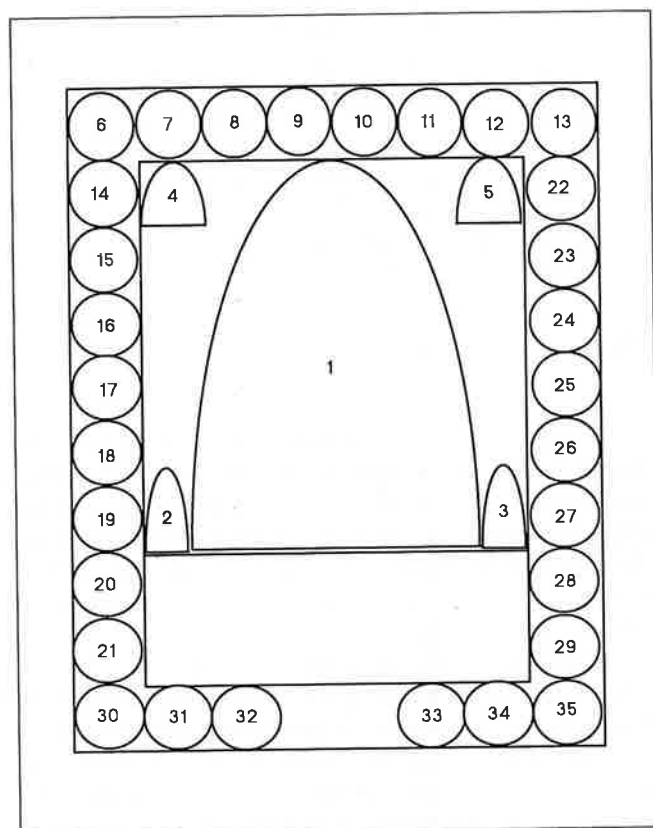


Figure 68. Diagram of cat. no. 122.

Across the top of the painting are the eight Mānuṣi Buddhas, consisting of the seven Buddhas of the past and Maitreya (Tib. Byams pa), the Buddha of the future (i.e., Ketumati Maitreya) (6-13). The other seven figures, the Buddhas of the past are: 1) Vipaśyin (Tib. rNam gzig), 2) Śikhin (Tib. gTsug gtor can), 3) Viśvabhū (Tib. Thams cad skyobs), 4) Krakucchandra (Tib. 'Khor ba 'jigs), 5) Kanakamuni (Tib. gSer thub), 6) Kāśyapa (Tib. 'Od srung), and 7) Śākyamuni (Tib. Śākya thub pa). It is not possible to correlate the specific Buddhas with the figures depicted, since these images do not conform to standard iconographic



conventions. Several of the group appear to have been made into "dual images" by giving them the same colors as some of the Jina Buddhas, i.e., blue for Akṣobhya<sup>1</sup> (12), yellow for Ratnasambhava (8), red for Amitābha (11), and white for Vairocana (10). However, the iconography of the Jina Buddhas is incomplete. Amoghasiddhi, who would be green, is absent, and only two of the figures, Vairocana and Akṣobhya, are shown with their identifying gestures (Skt. *mudrā*).<sup>2</sup> Thus, the best identification that can be given of these figures is that they are an unconventional set of Mānuṣi Buddhas with four, or five, of them serving dually as images of the Jina Buddhas. The significance of the presence of this group is that, according to the tantric tradition, the Buddhas of the ten directions appear at the time of enlightenment of a new Buddha to convey their own enlightenment to him. This conveyance, or bestowal, has the character of an initiatory consecration, which may be why the Mānuṣi Buddha group sometimes incorporates aspects of the initiating Jina Buddhas. In any case, the presence of the Mānuṣi Buddhas is an expression of the enlightened status and equivalence to a Buddha of the teacher. They also constitute the source of authority for the ordination lineage that is portrayed at the sides of the painting.

On each side of the teacher in the central frame (4, 5) and along the sides of the painting (14-29) are members of the transmission or ordination lineage of the teacher in the center. While I have been able to identify many of these figures, those whose dates would have a direct bearing on the date of the painting have not been identifiable. Some of these individuals are associated with the ordination lineage that passed through Śākya Śrī, and their presence here may indicate the lineage of ordination that passed to the central teacher.

Across the bottom of the painting are the patron (30) and five protective deities who bestow prosperity and spiritual attainments: Vaiśravaṇa (Tib. rNam thos sras, pronounced Namthösay) (31), Pīṭa Jambhala (Tib. Dzam bha la ser po, pronounced Jambhala serpo) (32), Kṛṣṇa Jambhala Kāśmīri *mahāpaṇḍita* Krama (Tib. Dzam bha la nag po Kha che Paṇ chen lugs, pronounced Jambala nakpo Kachay Panchenluk) (33), 'Sita Gaṇeśa (Tib. Tshogs bdag dkar po, pronounced Shokdak karmo) (34), and a yellow female resembling Tārā (35). In the center is the vase that is essentially the vase of generation of the deities. During certain meditations, the practitioner envisions the deities emerging from such a vase, and at the end of the meditations envisions their return to it.

The date of the painting is open to considerable speculation. Unfortunately, little information pertinent to the dating can be gained from the lineage in the painting. Identified by inscriptions, the figure in the upper left corner of the central frame (4) is Byang chub bzang po (1281-1356), who occupied the chair of mTshal gung thang

(a bKa' brgyud monastery just east of Lhasa) for forty-seven years, and in the right corner (5) is Sher mgon pa (active early fourteenth century), an abbot of Tshogs pa. Both were fourteenth-century preceptors of considerable importance. Since preceptor lineages may omit a few individuals, it is not possible to conclude that the teacher in the center is the direct descendent of these preceptors. It is possible that the patron chose to portray his most illustrious predecessors rather than the immediately preceding teachers. It is therefore possible that between fifty and 150 years passed between the lifetimes of the two preceptors and the time of the creation of the painting. Even if the subject of the painting is one of the immediate disciples of one of these two individuals, he clearly had reached an advanced age—as evidenced by his gray hair and wrinkled features—when the portrait was done, perhaps between fifty and seventy years after his own ordination.<sup>3</sup> Thus, when a disciple of the older man in the center of the painting decided to make an offering of his teacher's portrait, a considerable time had passed since the lives of the two most recent identifiable individuals in the painting—probably no less than fifty years. Therefore, it must be argued that ultimately a fourteenth-century date is out of the question and that the mid-to-late fifteenth or even early sixteenth century is the most probable date of the painting.

Stylistically, the painting dramatically diverges from other paintings of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. While it is clearly Pāla-based in such elements as the basic structure of the composition, the throne, the triangular treatment of the throne back behind the secondary figures, and the rimmed auras of the subsidiary teachers and deities, Bal bris ornamental conventions and details also abound in the painting. These are relatively freely executed in a manner that is totally unlike the brush technique used in the Sa skya Bal bris depiction of Mahākāla (cat. no. 120). In contrast to the precise, almost microscopic treatment of the details of the Mahākāla, the details of this painting are done in a bold, loose, almost casual style that suggests the hand of a painter who was totally certain of his skills, but who was mastering a variant of a style that was perhaps new to him. The Tibetan Bal bris details include the structure of the infoliated spiral motifs, the *vyālakas* and upturned ends of the cross-members of the throne, and the treatment of the gems covering the throne back. However, there is a new element in the painting that is not traceable to either the Nepali or Pāla sources. The background infoliation is dark green with lighter green detailing and yellow highlighting. While the forms descend from the conventional Bal bris vocabulary, the coloristic approach and yellow highlighting are distinctly Chinese features that evidence unmistakable Chinese influence on the painting.

The stylistic school to which this painting belongs

could well be sMan bris, particularly in view of the salient Chinese influence. In addition, because of the individualization of the teacher's countenance and his portrayal in a decidedly realistic manner that verges on portraiture, it tentatively may be assigned to the Byang lugs subschool, which is associated with the fifteenth-century artist Byang bdag nam rgyal grags bzang and was popular in the area of Yar 'brog from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> However, this stylistic attribution must remain a working hypothesis until a fuller picture of Tibetan painting styles emerges.

1. On rare occasions Vairocana and Akṣobhya exchange colors, so that Akṣobhya is white and Vairocana is blue.
2. The *dhyāna mudrā* of fourth figure from the left (9) suggests that he might be Amitābha. However, the third figure from the right (11) is the appropriate red color for Amitābha. Therefore, the identities of these two figures cannot be established.
3. Ordinations are usually (but not invariably) given when the novice is in the late teens or early twenties.
4. Smith notes that Byang lugs may be one of the oldest schools of Tibetan art. He associates it with Ngam rings, the ancient capital of the myriarchs of La stod byang. See Introduction by E. Gene Smith in Lokesh Chandra, ed., *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1970), 47.

123

MAHĀRAKTA GAṆEŚA (TIB. TSHOGS BDAG DMAR CHEN; pronounced Tsokdak marchen)

Tibet, Early mKhyen bris school (?)

Late sixteenth or early seventeenth century

Water-based pigments on cotton cloth

H: 12 1/4" W: 10 3/8"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Illustrated in color

Gaṇeśa, or Gaṇapati (Tib. Tshogs bdag), occurs in two contexts in Tibetan Buddhism. In one he personifies obstacles to be overcome and in that role is trampled upon by Buddhist deities, especially certain forms of Mahākāla.<sup>1</sup> In the other context he himself is the overcomer of obstacles, analogous to his role in Hinduism, and in that role is one of the great Dharmapālas, or "protectors of the faith," in Buddhism. In this painting he is accompanied by a two-armed form of Cakrasaṃvara (top left corner), an unidentified Dharmapāla (top right corner),<sup>2</sup> an unidentified Sa skya monk who is apparently the patron (bottom left corner), and a two-armed form of Mahākāla (bottom right corner). Although originally a Hindu deity, Gaṇeśa also has a long history in the Buddhist context. The first known surviving example of Gaṇeśa in Buddhist art occurs in a sixth-century cave at Aurangabad,<sup>3</sup> and he had entered China in the context of Tantric Buddhism by the early eighth century.

Although a bit more svelte than the usual Pāla

depictions of Gaṇeśa, the figure's Pāla heritage is easily seen by comparing this with a Pāla period example (cat. no. 21). The dancing pose, drooping belly, and general corpulence are clearly derived from Pāla conceptions. The three secondary figures also closely follow Pāla conventions, with their relatively plain auras and simple lotus pedestals. In particular, the definition of a secondary rim within the auras is notably Pāla in derivation. The circular gems of the throne back emerging from behind the aura of the monk are essentially abbreviations of the gem encrusted, triangular throne backs that have been seen in earlier paintings. The Sa skya Bal bris heritage is still manifestly evident in the details of Gaṇeśa's crown and the foliated scroll motif in the aura behind him.

Important innovations seen in this painting are the landscape behind the aura and the small precious objects floating in space around the composition. The mountains derive from the Blue-Green school of Chinese painting of the late Ming (1368-1644) and early Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. The geometric blocks of mountains painted deep blue and deep green, shading into tan, and their repetitive geometric shapes delineated by black lines and highlighted by either gold or yellow are standard features of this Chinese school. Also based strictly on Chinese landscape conventions are the foliage, trees, bushes, and tiny birds fashioned by small, dotlike brush strokes.<sup>4</sup> Even the drapery worn by Gaṇeśa is portrayed in a loose, free-flowing Chinese mode, with the highly abstract and freely painted designs used to convey the brocading.<sup>5</sup> While conventional iconometrics were followed for the depiction of the figure, literally all of the discretionary and decorative details were rendered in Chinese style.

Conspicuous throughout the composition are tiny gold precious objects, or treasures. In traditional Chinese symbolism there are eight treasures (*babao*): the pearl, double rhombus, stone chime, rhinoceros horn, coin, mirror, book, and artemisia leaf. These became "seven gems" (Tib. *nor bu cha bdun*) in the Tibetan context: a branched coral, two elephant tusks, a rhinoceros horn, king's earrings, queen's earrings, minister's earrings, and, on alternate lists, a gold coin or a triple gem. This composition includes elephant tusks (extreme top left), rhinoceros horn (extreme top right), king's earrings (interlocking lozenge shapes at left), queen's earrings (interlocking circles at right), and numerous variants on the triple gem motif (throughout the composition).

These precious objects represent the rain of treasures that occurs when the Dharma is proclaimed. Virtually all of my informants consider the rain of treasures (or other auspicious objects) to be characteristic of the mKhyen bris school. The rain of treasures does not seem to appear in any other of the school's paintings in exactly this dispersed and seemingly random manner. Therefore, it may be that this is an early example of the mKhyen bris school, before

the motif was standardized. Nonetheless, all of the salient features of the painting match what is to be expected from this school, namely, the Chinese treatment of the discretionary elements, the continuation of the Pāla-dependent Bal bris style for the figures, and the characteristically mKhyen bris rain of treasures.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, "Tibetan Art in the John Gilmore Ford Collection," *Arts of Asia* 5, no. 6 (Nov./Dec. 1975), 56; Detlef-Ingo Lauf, *Verborgene Botschaft Tibetischer Thangkas (Secret Revelation of Tibetan Thangkas): Picture Meditation and Interpretation of Lamaist Cult Paintings* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Auum Verlag GmbH and Co. KG, 1976), 152-153; Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thangkas Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* (Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984), 152, 215, pl. 75.

1. Especially Mahākālas of the Shes rab mgon po group, i.e., mGon po bar cad kun sel, mGon dkar yid bzhi nor bu, mGon ser blo 'phel, mGon dmar dbang rgyal po, and mGon ljang tshe bdag. See Lokesh Chandra, *Buddhist Iconography*, 2 vols. (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1987), vol. I, 318-320.
2. Although unidentified, the deity is probably either a form of Mahākāla (based on his color, skull cup, and flaying knife) or Hayagrīva (because of his drawn bow with arrow). It is not of the Jambhala group, as suggested in Detlef-Ingo Lauf, *Verborgene Botschaft Tibetischer Thangkas (Secret Revelation of Tibetan Thangkas): Picture Meditation and Interpretation of Lamaist Cult Paintings* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Auum Verlag GmbH and Co. KG, 1976), 152.
3. It occurs in Cave 6. For a discussion of the iconography of this and related caves, see John C. Huntington, "Cave Six at Aurangabad: A Tantrayāna Monument?" in *Kāladarśana: American Studies in the Art of India*, ed. Joanna G. Williams (New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1981): 47-55.
4. The landscapes, drapery, and other conventions also may be seen in the paintings from the Bao ning Temple used for the Shui lu ceremony. The Bao ning Temple paintings must have been known to some Tibetans, as suggested by a painting showing an Arhat writing a Tibetan inscription in a book. See *Bao ning si Mingdai Shuilu Hua* (Beijing: Wen Wu, 1988), pls. 39 and 40 (painting "right nine"). The same painting has exactly the type of rectilinear mountains as the Gaṇeśa discussed here.
5. For comparison see the many variations of this treatment in the paintings in the *Bao ning si Mingdai Shuilu Hua*, pls. 49, 63, and *passim*.

124

BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER  
MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA) ATTENDED BY  
AVALOKITEŚVARA AND MAITREYA

Sino-Tibetan, possibly Khams District, Early Kar ma sGa  
bris

Ca. fifteenth or sixteenth century

Opaque watercolors on cotton cloth

H: 21 1/2" W: 10"

Navin Kumar Gallery, New York City

Illustrated in color

This painting represents the *summum bonum* of Buddhist  
soteriology—the moment when Prince Siddhārtha won

the right to Buddhahood by defeating Māra, which took place at the eastern side of the *aśvattha* tree at Bodh Gayā. Perhaps no other Tibetan painting delineates both the problems and parameters of style as clearly as this painting of the Māravijaya. The figures of Śākyamuni and the two attending Bodhisattvas are the product of a long and vigorous line of iconomorphic development beginning with the earliest Shar mthun bris (cat. nos. 105, 107, and 109) and moving through the Transitional Shar mthun bris (cat. no. 111) and Late Shar mthun bris (cat. no. 115). The iconographic evolution has been shaped by the Nepali influences of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This Nepali line inundated the Sa skya Bal bris school and is maintained here in painting that otherwise has a distinctively Chinese cast.

The Chinese appearance of the painting comes from the background, which consists of an ungrounded, pale blue wash applied directly to the unsized cloth; the lines used to delineate the clouds and the leaves of the *bodhi* tree of Śākyamuni (an *aśvattha* tree); and the general simplification of ornamentation. The unpainted background contrasts sharply to the densely filled space seen in paintings of the Bal bris school. This treatment of space has a long tradition of development in Chinese painting, wherein, especially in figure painting (as this painting would be considered), the background is rendered with only the barest elements necessary to suggest a context, creating an atmosphere of spacious expanse. In addition, the painter has employed a characteristically Chinese calligraphic line to suggest volume. The clouds and leaves of the *bodhi* tree are outlined by lines that vary greatly in width in the course of a single stroke, thereby conveying a sense of three-dimensionality of the forms. Such calligraphic lines are completely unlike the uniform, unvarying lines that define the robes of the Bodhisattvas and Śākyamuni. The more expressive calligraphic lines had undergone a long history of development in China and allow an artist to utilize the flexibility and line control possible with finely crafted brushes.

Other elements retain their basic Pāla structures, as transmitted through Nepal and the Bal bris school, while being modified by Chinese decorative treatments. For example, the underlying architecture of the throne base is virtually identical to that of the Sa skya teacher (cat. no. 122), although here it is much less detailed and ornamented. This modification also demonstrates what is optional and what is not. The throne base belonging to the teacher is richly ornamented in the Bal bris style with heavy gem encrustations, multiple registers of lotus petals, lions, and a cloth draped over the front of the throne that derives from metal images of eastern India of the tenth century. Even the upturned corners of the sides of the teacher's throne base are a product of an ornamental tradition that was developed in eastern India, modified in Nepal, and

adopted as the Bal bris school in Tibet. In contrast, the throne base of this Māravijaya lacks virtually all of these details and yet is structured in an identical manner. Its basic design conforms rigidly to the Pāla sources, while its ornamentation follows the Chinese Blue-Green school.

This painting heralds the beginning of a new amalgam. It retains Bal bris iconometric and iconomorphic conventions, but they are placed within the subtler, more spacious settings adopted from the Chinese Blue-Green school. This amalgamation signals the future direction of Tibetan painting.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Paintings, A Study of Tibetan Thankas Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries* (Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984), 154, 216, pl. 83.

125

CAKRASAMVARA AND VAJRAVĀRĀHĪ (TIB. 'KHOR LO BDE MCHOG AND RDO RJE PHAG MO; pronounced Korlo demchok and Dorjay pakmo)

China, Sino-Tibetan Bal bris

Ca. 1333 or 1360-1364, Yuan dynasty

Silk, *kesi* (ko ssu) slit weave textile

H: 49 1/2" W: 28" overall

Dr. Wesley Halpert and Mrs. Carolyn M. Halpert

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Illustrated in color

Yuan and Ming *kesi* textiles, long known for their incredible detailing and virtually perfect craftsmanship,<sup>1</sup> were a natural continuation of the East Asian textile tradition in the service of Buddhism. The *kesi*, or slit weave technique,<sup>2</sup> is distinctive in that where the colors of the design change an internal selvage is formed with only a few overlapping threads in the cases of long changes of color.<sup>3</sup> This produces the characteristic "slits" that appear at first examination to be tiny breaks in the fabric. In areas where the effect of shading is accomplished, compactly woven dovetail tapestry techniques are used. In dovetail tapestry, the colors are interwoven across the same (and sometimes several) warp threads, leaving no slit. While the slit weave technique is perhaps better known in the United States from the *kilim* rug tradition of Anatolia and the Caucasus region, the Chinese *kesi* raised the pictorial slit weave technique to the level of the finest detailed pictorial representations found anywhere in the world, literally on a par with the most detailed paintings by the northern Renaissance masters or of the Mughal miniature painting tradition. Close inspection of the fabric reveals that not a single thread is out of place on the entire surface. The overall effect is a minutely pointillistic rendition of the

subject matter.

This *kesi* of Cakrasamvara is easy to date because of the presence of a Kar ma pa in the upper right-hand corner of the design. He can be identified by the particular form of his hat, which is the characteristic headgear of the incarnate heads of the Kar ma bKa' brgyud subsect. During the pre-Yuan Mongol Empire and early Yuan, the Sa skya hierarchs gained ascendancy as the representatives of Tibetan Buddhism in China; during the late Yuan and through much of the Ming, it was the Kar ma pas of the Kar ma bKa' brgyud sect who served as preceptors to the imperial court. Accordingly, the presence of a Kar ma pa clearly indicates that this textile is a product of the late Yuan or Ming period. The date further may be refined on the basis of the hat, or crown, the Kar ma pa wears, which is a form of the *vajra* crown that was in use prior to the Yongle Emperor's gift of a material hat to the fifth Kar ma pa during his 1405-1409 stay at court as the Yongle Emperor's *guru*. Because the hat presented to the fifth Kar ma pa was significantly different in appearance from that worn by his predecessors (fig. 69), it can be inferred that the figure in the upper right corner is either the third Kar ma pa, who visited China in 1333, or the fourth Kar ma pa, who was at the Chinese court in 1360-1364.

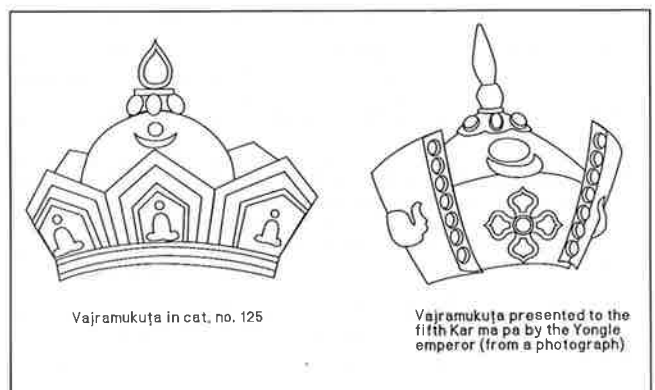


Figure 69. Comparison of hats worn by Kar ma pas.

Fabrics of this degree of luxury and expense were generally but not exclusively the prerogative of the imperial court. Thus, it is likely that such a lavish object would have been a product of imperial patronage. Further, it is probable that it was created as a gift for either the third or the fourth Kar ma pa, as may be suggested by the figure in the upper right corner. Because the creation of such textiles was a lengthy and involved process, it may be suggested that it was produced during the visit of the fourth Kar ma pa to China, since his stay was longer than that of the third Kar ma pa. Accordingly, the date is probably ca. 1360-1364.

Iconographically, this image is conceptually identical with the Nepali and Tibetan Bal bris depictions of Cakrasamvara (cat. nos. 92 and 117). The central figure of



Cakrasaṃvara in union with Vajravārāhī is the progenitor of the entire *maṇḍala* and as such directly manifests the whole. (For a detailed description of the Cakrasaṃvara iconography, see Appendix II.)

Above and to the left is the Ādi Buddha, or primordial Buddha, of the bKa' brgyud sect, Vajradhara, who is present as the progenitor of Cakrasaṃvara. In the lower corners are Caturbhuja Mahākāla (Tib. mGon po phyag bzhi pa, pronounced Gonpo chagzipa), literally, the "Four-Armed Great Black One," to the left and an unidentified Dharmapāla to the right. Mahākāla is one of the major Dharmapālas (protectors of the Dharma) and is a wrathful emanation of the Bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteśvara. Caturbhuja Mahākāla is not part of the *maṇḍala* of Cakrasaṃvara but is routinely associated with it in Cakrasaṃvara images created for bKa' brgyud monasteries and patrons.

Stylistically, the image of Cakrasaṃvara is only a single generation removed from the Pāla sources and is a direct descendant of the Bal bris school of Tibet, as seen in cat. no. 116. Except for the technique, which is quintessentially Chinese, and some minor elaborations of the petals of the lotus pedestal, there is little alteration of the iconomorphic convention. This may be seen easily by comparison to the Tibetan depiction of Cakrasaṃvara in the Bal bris style (cat. no. 117). The obvious similarity of the figures is actually not germane to the discussion because these are iconometrically determined and, as noted previously, constitute the iconomorph around which the rest of the more discretionary details are arrayed. In the textile, the details are primarily the flame-aura of Cakrasaṃvara, the blue background, and the lotus pedestal on which the pair stands. Because of the differences in the compositions, only the central portion of the Tibetan painting may be compared to the textile. The outer registers of deities of the *maṇḍala* retinue are omitted in the textile, but this allowed the throne base to be depicted, whereas it has been omitted in the painting. Allowing for these differences in discretionary compositional elements, it is possible to see the closeness of the two representations. A comparison of the curvilinear tendrils in the aura shows that they are very closely related, as are the multiple layers of the lotus petals in the pedestal. Considering the temporal and technical gulf between the two images, their pictorial elements are remarkably similar, both in structure and coloration. However, even more important are the discretionary aspects of the jewelry and ornamental trappings of the figures. Although subject to the inherently less detailed approach demanded by the textile medium, detail-by-detail the features parallel each other throughout both compositions. The ongoing traditions of south-central Tibet and of the Bal bris school had simply been transferred without modification to China, where they found expression in this magnificent textile.

Mantras from the *thang khebs* (cover)<sup>4</sup> of the textile:

Top left:

*Om Aḥ Hūm na mo ba dzra dhara ya svā hā*

Top right:

*Om A sa rba byid yu [sic. for ye?] she yas ba dzra<sup>5</sup>*

Center:

*Om ba dzra A yu she ye sva hā /*

*Om sarva bid, hūm /*

*Om shri ba dzra he he ru ru kam hūm  
hūm phat / Ḍa ki nī Dḍā la Shamba ram Svā hā  
Om hriḥ Ha Ha Hūm Hūm Phat / Om ba dzra Bai  
ro tsa nī ye Hūm  
Hūm phat svā hā / Om Sa rba Buddha ḍā kī nī ye  
ba dzra va rna nī ye Hūm Hūm  
Phat svā hā / Ye dha rma hetu pra bha bha ba tu ...  
/ Om su pra ti ṣṭha ba dzra ye svā hā / Om Hūm  
tram hriḥ Aḥ Om Āh*

(Lower left and lower right inscriptions not legible from study photographs and could not be deciphered.)

PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Oriental Art* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 44, figs. 21, 21a.

1. See Schuyler Cammann, "Notes on the Origin of Chinese K'o-ssu Tapestry," *Artibus Asiae* 11 (1948): 90-110. This article recently was reprinted as "Notes on the Origin of Chinese Kesi Tapestry," in *Oriental Art* 20, no. 8 (Aug. 1989): 74-81.
2. Technically, the weave is called "slit tapestry" and consists of a tightly packed, weft-faced, plain weave fabric. See Irene Emery, *The Primary Structures of Fabrics: An Illustrated Classification* (Washington, D.C.: The Textile Museum, 1966), 78-79, 88-90.
3. Emery calls this technique "reinforced slit weave."
4. The *thang khebs* has been removed by the owner and is not in the exhibition.
5. The word "*ba dzra*" [*vajra*] occurs under the principal line of the top right inscription between the OM and the A. Therefore, it looks as if it has been carried over from the first line. However, it is probably a "correction," meant to be inserted between the OM and the A, in which case the line would read *Om Ba dzra A sa rba byid yu she yas*. This is the pattern seen in the first line of the center inscriptions.

"THE ASSEMBLY AT WHICH THE BHĀGAVAN  
[LORD] BUDDHA ŚĀKYAMUNI TAUGHT [THIS  
SŪTRA]." INSCRIBED IDENTIFICATION OF THE  
FRONTISPIECE (*FEIHUA*) OF THE *HUI SHANG PEI SA*  
*WEN DASHANQUAN JING (HUI SHANG P'EI SA*  
*WEN TA SHAN CH'ÜAN CHING*; Skt.  
*JÑĀNOTTARABODHISATTVAPARIPRCCHĀ-SŪTRA*)

China, Suzhou, Sino-Tibetan Bal bris  
Dated 1306 under the Yuan dynasty  
Black ink on paper, xylograph  
H: 11 3/16" W: 4 7/16" (as folded)  
Gest Oriental Library, Princeton University

Rediscovered only in 1931 in Xi'an, the long lost Jisha edition of the Buddhist canon constitutes a major landmark of Chinese Buddhist canonical compilation and of the presence of Sino-Tibetan Bal bris in China. The Jisha edition was a publically supported project begun in 1232 and completed in 1322,<sup>1</sup> with a hiatus from 1265 to 1297, the period of Mongol consolidation of power in the region. The designs were made and the woodblocks cut at the monastery of Yansheng Yuan, which was situated on an island in Chenhu Pingjiangfu (Ch'en-hu P'ing-chiang-fu), Suzhou, in Jiangxi (Chiang-hsi) province. Originally there were 6,362 volumes, of which about eighty percent survive in two monasteries in Xi'an.<sup>2</sup>

The *feihua* shows a teaching assembly of Śākyamuni Buddha, ostensibly the one at which the *sūtra* that is contained in the attached text was taught. According to Buddhist tradition, all *sūtras* were first spoken by the Buddha Śākyamuni in the form of a teaching to an assembly of beings before being recorded in written form. The purpose of the *feihua* is to set the stage for the hearing of the text so that the reader can gain the sense of hearing the Buddha's words directly, as if present as part of the original assembly.

Stylistically the composition has a complex ancestry, drawing both on traditional Chinese figure painting and on the Pāla-derived iconographic models that must have been circulated throughout the Yuan workshops, originating mainly under the direction of the Nepali artist Anige. Details of the throne, the *prabhāvalī*, the proportions of the Buddha's anatomy, and the details of the Bodhisattvas' garb—especially the headdresses, jewelry, and hair arrangements—are directly derived from the Tibetan Bal bris school as practiced in gTsang, the home territory of the Sa skya school. Chinese elements appear in the subsidiary figures, clouds, and attire of the royal patrons. These elements are traceable to the Song and Yuan figure-painting schools and reaffirm that the treatment of these secondary figures is a discretionary vehicle for the artists. In particular, the group of figures behind the Bodhisattvas have Chinese prototypes that can

be seen in the great murals of the T'ang dynasty at Dunhuang. These spirit beings, generals, and sages are all essentially stock figural types of the Chinese painter.

A comparison of the throne structure to that of the Early Tibetan Bal bris example of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 116) clearly illustrates how fully the Sino-Tibetan Bal bris relies on the Tibetan conventions. While somewhat more elongated vertically, the throne in the Sino-Tibetan *feihua* retains most of the elements of the Tibetan Bal bris throne. From the *makaras*, whose tails evolve into the elaborate infoliation at the top of the throne, through the *vyālakas* with the leogryph standing on the heads of lions, to the throne base and the drapery over the front of it, the whole throne structure is virtually identical. The secondary Bodhisattva figures of the *feihua* are more advanced than those in the Vajrasattva painting, being more elaborate and having more decorative components, but the basic treatment of the jewelry and dress are very similar.

By understanding which aspects of the *feihua* truly reflect the Tibetan Bal bris school and which represent the ongoing tradition of Chinese figure painting, it is possible to evaluate the effect of the Bal bris school on Chinese Buddhist art. With the introduction of the Tibetan Bal bris school, Chinese Buddhist art entered a new era. The style became richer and more elaborate, yet had sufficient vitality and dynamism to alter the course of Chinese Buddhist art, shaping its development to the present day.

#### PUBLISHED:

Sherman E. Lee and Wai-kam Ho, *Chinese Art Under the Mongols* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), 276-280; Heather Karmay, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1975), 46-50, no. 27; Sören Edgren et. al., *Chinese Rare Books in American Collections* (New York: China House Gallery and China Institute of America, 1984), 80-81.

1. Heather Karmay, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1975), 46.
2. Sherman E. Lee and Wai-kam Ho, *Chinese Art Under the Mongols* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), 276.

## INTRODUCTION TO TIBETAN STONE SCULPTURE

### CAT. NOS. 127-130

Although stone was a major medium for the arts during both the First Propagation and the early Second Propagation, Tibetan stone sculpture is little known outside of Tibet. All presently known First Propagation examples are quite crude, barely above the level of unskilled hacking at rock. When one considers the very high level of craftsmanship displayed in the finely carved wooden timbers surviving in some buildings (such as the Jo khang in Lhasa) and some of the exquisite metalwork known from early Tibet, it must be suggested that the local craftsmen who attempted the first stone carvings were totally unfamiliar with the tools and techniques used by stone cutters even in the neighboring regions of Kashmir and Nepal. The Tibetan low-relief images in caves and in cliff faces and even a few *brhad* (great, i.e., large or colossal) images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are always extremely crude.<sup>1</sup> Yet by the end of the eleventh or early twelfth century, remarkably crafted, truly exquisite miniature carvings in a variety of types of stone were being made. Primarily made in a very fine grained, yellowish-beige stone, the identification of which has been the subject of much controversy, these carvings are often a *tour de force* of carving skill and sculptural conceptualization.

Most of what has become known outside of Tibet are very small votive or meditational images, usually less than five inches high. These are usually of considerable age, with most of them appearing in styles that would suggest about a twelfth-century date. They are highly prized by Tibetans who are aware of them, but most Tibetans that I have asked about them (including several very sophisticated and learned individuals with wide knowledge of the arts of Tibet) only vaguely knew of their existence and had no specific information relating to these images.

The great Tibetan polymaths apparently paid little attention to stone and, unlike the painting and metal-image traditions, stone sculpture is barely mentioned by them. Tucci cites an anonymous author's treatise on image making and style that gives a list of stones used in carving.<sup>2</sup> These include *kāmaru*,<sup>3</sup> a white stone; *rdog nyen* (= *mnyen*), a black soft stone; and *shel*, or *shel dkar*, rock crystal.<sup>4</sup>

*Kāmaru* is, as Tucci suggests, probably a transcription for *Kāmarūpa*, an ancient name for what is now Assam region in northeastern India. However, the fact that it is called *kāmaru* does not mean that the ultimate source of the stone was Assam; more probably it was imported via trading missions to that region.<sup>5</sup> Tucci's statement that the white stone is alabaster is without foundation.<sup>6</sup> (I have yet to see one piece of alabaster from Tibet.) It would appear that the soft white stone in question is the yellowish-beige pyrophyllite that is found in the exquisite miniature carvings in the exhibition.

There are many questions about the origin of these pieces and the source of the stone from which they are carved. The issue is complicated by the fact that there are a number of stone carvings that are probably from Myanmar (Burma) (see cat. nos. 61 and 62) that are made of a very similar stone and also in a distinctive Pāla-derived style. Stylistic differences between the Tibetan and presumed Myanmari examples preclude their having been made in the same workshop. However, three pieces in this exhibition, a Tibetan-made *Tārā* (cat. no. 129) and the two presumed Myanmari plaques (cat. nos. 61 and 62) have been examined scientifically and found to be of the same stone, a pyrophyllite.<sup>7</sup> Other objects of possible Indian origin of a similar appearing stone, but much debated, are a miniature temple (cat. 41), a related miniature temple in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and another in the British Museum.<sup>8</sup> A further consideration is that the vast majority of these objects in the problematic stone date from around the twelfth century. Given this broader view of objects carved in very similar if not identical stone and created in neighboring cultures and in the same approximate timeframe, it may be suggested that the uncut stone itself was what travelled rather than the finished objects. This suggestion is reinforced by the fact that a virtually identical stone was used in China for inkstones during the late Song (Sung) dynasty (late twelfth and thirteenth centuries).<sup>9</sup> For the same type of stone to have been discovered independently during the late eleventh or early twelfth century in three separate locations and for the supply to have run out at almost exactly the same time in all three locations would be a coincidence beyond even the remotest possibility.

Thus, a working hypothesis for the problem of this type of stone may be proposed. The stone, probably quarried in southwestern China,<sup>10</sup> was traded through the usual trade routes into Tibet and Myanmar (Burma). Specifically, it would have gone through Assam (Kāmarūpa). The stone is truly remarkable in the fineness of its structure. For all practical purposes it is grainless, textureless, and unlayered—therefore ideal for carving the intricate details of miniature stelae. To a trader, it may have been worth its weight in gold.

The critical questions are where and by whom these images were made. If they are by Tibetans, it would appear that a detailed and complicated craft had been mastered without any apparent learning curve whatsoever. If they are by either Nepali or Indic craftsmen, where are the indigenous Nepali or Indic prototypes? No prototypes as close as one reasonably might expect have come to light. Only the miniature stone carvings of various stela conventions found at Nālandā come close, and there are many major differences both in technique and in conception.

On the other hand, many of the objects are so Pāla-like in their design and execution that there is significant disagreement regarding their place of origin. Indeed, although I am inclined to attribute nearly all of the “white” stone sculptures in question to Tibet,<sup>11</sup> only two of the ones in this exhibition (cat. nos. 128 and 129), have unequivocal evidence of having been in Tibet. The three-dimensional image of Tārā (cat. no. 129) has been painted with the traditional cold gilding of the face and lapis blue hair color found on many Tibetan sculptural images, while the stela of Tārā (cat. no. 128) has a scrawled Tibetan inscription on the reverse.

Although there has been considerable excavation of Buddhist sites in India, only a fragment of one image carved in this stone has come to light in the archaeological context.<sup>12</sup> Thousands of *sāccha*, hundreds of bronzes, and even dozens of miniature stone sculptures have been found in the excavations of Pāla Buddhist sites, and hoards of *sāccha* and bronzes have appeared from accidental finds. Yet there is no corpus of images made of this stone as there appears to be for the Tibetan sculptural idiom. Moreover, each example that we have examined<sup>13</sup> exhibits an oily patina, a sign of continued, long-term handling, but not one that we have seen has shown any sign of having been buried or profoundly weathered. Because the Buddhist religion came to a complete halt in the Pāla regions, virtually all small Buddhist objects found in India have survived after being buried, a condition that leads to easily determined characteristics. While this is negative evidence of a type that does not disprove the Indic origin of these objects, there have been enough excavations of Indian Buddhist sites and chance finds to presume that, from a statistical standpoint, it is the most “conclusive”

evidence that ever will be available.

Additional support for a Tibetan origin of these objects comes from the fact that a significant number do demonstrate obvious Tibetan characteristics, indicating that they were unequivocally in Tibet at some time. Further, when their recent histories can be traced, it is clear that they invariably have come through the Tibetan/Nepali dealer network through which most Tibetan objects reaching Europe and American collections travel. Accordingly, until there is clear evidence of an Indian workshop producing them or until significant numbers are found in India,<sup>14</sup> a Tibetan origin seems to be the most likely possibility.

A determination of the Tibetan origin of these images would still leave the question of their stylistic closeness to the Pāla idiom and the remarkable quality of the carving. It is my belief that both are essentially a “sign of the times” both artistically and iconographically in twelfth-century Tibet. Tibetan painting reached a zenith of skill and craftsmanship in the Transitional Shar mthun bris paintings such as the Avalokiteśvara (cat. nos. 110), Vajrasattva (cat. no. 111) and Śyāma Tārā (cat. no. 113). Metal images copied the Pāla idiom so closely that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish accurately between works of the two schools. The Shar mthun school was the main school of twelfth-century Tibetan art; therefore, the stone carvings could hardly be in any other style if they were made in the mainstream Tibetan cultural context. I have noted elsewhere that the stone presumably was very valuable. It was highly prized both in China and Myanmar. Therefore, as an “exotic import” into Tibet it would have been available only to the wealthiest patrons and monasteries, the same people and institutions that would have had access to the most highly trained artists and true masters of the style.

127

GUHYASAMĀJA MAÑJUVAJRA (TIB. GSANG ‘DUS JAM RDOR; pronounced Sangdū jamdor)  
Tibet, Early Shar mthun sku (this image is known to have come out of Tibet)

Ca. twelfth century

Fine-grained yellowish-beige stone (possibly pyrophyllite)<sup>15</sup>

H: 2 7/8" W: 2" D: 1"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Edwin R. and Harriet Pelton Perkins Memorial Fund (87.44)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra is an esoteric form of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and is recognized by the sword he holds in his upper right hand. He is shown in *yuganaddha* (Tib. *yab yum*) pose with his female counterpart, who also



holds a sword in her upper right hand, so that the two swords are crossed behind the head of the deity. The treatment of the lotus petals of the lotus pedestal are closely modeled after Pāla prototypes; however, the pointy facial features and treatment of the jewelry as beadlike forms are not based on Pāla precedents. The precise carving and crisp details of this tiny image make it a masterpiece of the Tibetan stone carver's art.

PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 40, fig. 16.

128

SITA TĀRĀ (TIB. SGROL MA; pronounced Drolma)

Tibet, Early Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth century

Fine-grained yellowish-beige stone (possibly pyrophyllite)

H: 2 3/4" W: 1 7/8" D: 13/16"

Mr. and Mrs. James W. Alsdorf, Chicago

The piece is inscribed "*rgrom-ma*" and "*ga*," on the back. The "*ga*" is quite a bit larger and is centrally located below the throne while the "*rgrom ma*" is to the left of the lower portion of the back. The letter combination "*rgr*" does not occur in correct Tibetan orthography, indicating a less than fully literate scribe. However, in "*rgrom-ma*," both the initial "*r*" and the final "*m*" in "*rgrom*" would be silent. Therefore, the word would be pronounced "droma" which is almost the phonetic equivalent of sGrol ma (pronounced Drolma), the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit name Tārā, the generic name of the deity depicted in the sculpture. Because misspellings are common in early Tibetan inscriptions, it is appropriate to assume that the name is sGrol ma and is simply written with less than perfect orthography. The purpose of the "*ga*" is unknown,<sup>16</sup> but Tibetan letters are often used to indicate sequence, and since *ga* is the third letter in the Tibetan alphabet, it may have indicated the position of this image as the third in a group of unknown size.<sup>17</sup>

This miniature image closely follows the Pāla stone stele format, and resembles works of the Pāla idiom in numerous other details. The treatment of the lotus pedestal, the form of Tārā's body, and her facial features are particularly closely modeled on the Pāla style.

129

MAHĀŚRĪ TĀRĀ (TIB. SGROL MA DPAL CHEN; pronounced Drolma pelchen) (?)

Tibet, Early Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth century

Fine-grained yellowish-beige pyrophyllite (scientifically tested)<sup>18</sup>

H: 3 3/4" W: 2 1/8" D: 1 1/4"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D.

Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.38)

Illustrated in color

The identification of the figure in this exquisite little sculpture is impossible to determine with certainty, but she is probably Mahāśrī Tārā. The key attribute that would distinguish her from the goddess Prajñāpāramitā is damaged beyond recognition. If the image was a representation of Prajñāpāramitā, the lotus held in her left hand with the blossom resting above her left shoulder would have been a *puṇḍarīka* lotus, usually, but not invariably, supporting a book (Skt. *pustaka*) of a Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra. If the image was Mahāśrī Tārā, the attribute would have been a "blue lotus" or *nīlotpala*.<sup>19</sup> A closely related brass image of Mahāśrī Tārā (cat. no. 150) is iconomorphically identical but includes the identifying attribute. Both figures hold a lotus bud in their hands. This feature is not present in the iconographic descriptions of either deity and therefore must be derived from an unknown tradition. However, because of the presence of the lotus bud in the hands of the stone image that parallels the identifiable brass image, it is likely that this figure is probably also Mahāśrī Tārā.<sup>20</sup>

Mahāśrī Tārā is apparently unknown in later Tibetan iconographic compendia. In these later texts, most forms of Tārā invariably are depicted with the right hand displaying *varada mudrā*. Regrettably, the iconographic and teaching traditions surrounding both this and the brass figure are obscure.

PUBLISHED:

The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 21; Susan L. Huntington, "Pre-Pāla and Pāla Period Sculptures in the Rockefeller Collection," *Apollo*, n.s. 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 376 and illus. on 373 as figs. 10, 11 (at the time of publication, the image was thought to be Pāla, not Tibetan); Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), 17, 34-35, 68, 77, 84 (incorrectly identified on p. 84 as the Lokeśvara also in the collection of the Asia Society, which is illustrated by Newman as fig. 28); Donald

S. Lopez, Jr., and Steven C. Rockefeller, *Images of the Christ and the Bodhisattva* (Middlebury, Vermont: The Christian A. Johnson Memorial Gallery of Middlebury College, 1984), no. 31.

130

VAJRAVĀRĀHĪ (TIB. RDO RJE PHAG MO;  
pronounced Dorjay pakmo)

Tibet, Early Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth century

Fine-grained yellowish-beige stone (possibly  
pyrophyllite)

H: 3 3/4" W: 2 1/16" D: 1"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Anonymous Gift  
(66.144)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

A standard independent image of Vajravārāhī, this is one of the earliest examples in which the sow's muzzle appears at the proper right side of the head. The female Buddha Vajravārāhī sometimes appears alone, as here, or as the center of a *maṇḍala* with her retinue of yoginis. In other contexts she appears with her consort, the Heruka Cakrasaṃvara.<sup>21</sup> However, in this case the Heruka is symbolized by the staff carried by Vajravārāhī.

9. Robet Ellsworth, personal communication, July 1988.
10. It is my speculation that Yunnan would have been a likely source. Dali (Ta li), the ancient kingdom of Nanzhao (Nan chao), was centered in Yunnan and was on the trade route between China and Myanmar, and this stone may have been one of its products. Whether all the stone was from one site or not can only be determined by a scientific analysis of a large sample of the extant images carved from it.
11. The plaques probably made in Myanmar are clearly an exception. See cat. nos. 61 and 62.
12. "Excavations at Sarnath," *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1904-1905*, 84, fig. 8. Another possible exception is a small stele from Nālandā, now in the National Museum in New Delhi. However, this appears to be made of a significantly grainer stone than the objects under discussion, in which the grain is all but imperceptible.
13. We have seen a total of about twenty-five.
14. Because of the numbers of Tibetans that travelled to India during the Pāla period, the existence of a few stray pieces or fragments of pieces would not be sufficient evidence. In all cases when there is an Indian piece in Tibet there are significantly greater numbers of the style and type in India.
15. The identification of the material as steatite by The Cleveland Museum of Art is not inconsistent with the broader identification of the stone as pyrophyllite. Steatite is simply a phyllite of talc mineral.
16. It is very unlikely to be part of the *mantra* of Tārā as that is usually some permutation of OM TĀRE TUTTĀRE TURE SVĀHĀ. While there are many variations of the *mantra*, none of which I am aware contain the primary syllable GA.
17. Possibilities of group size would be primarily three, five, and twenty-one. Just as this catalog was being prepared, a larger image of all of the twenty-one forms of Tārā appeared in the New York market. Definitely of Tibetan manufacture because of the way the inscriptions are incorporated into the back of the composition, the piece is of the same period and basic style as this Tārā image. One important possibility is that the present image might have been part of a set of the twenty-one forms of Tārā with the position of each indicated by a Tibetan letter, i.e. "ka"=1, "kha"=2, "ga"=3, "nga"=4, etc. This is a common method of indicating sequence in Tibetan rather than by using numerals.
18. Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India*, 68, 77, 84.
19. Mallar Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India: A Study of Tārā, Prajñās of Five Tathāgatas and Bhṛikuṭī* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1980), 57-59.
20. It may be that this figure has a vinescroll motif on the reverse like that of the metal Mahāśrī Tārā (cat. no. 150). I was unable to examine the back of this piece and thus at the time of this writing have no knowledge of the back. The small elephant on the proper left side could represent the peril of being trampled by elephants. In that case the figure would be a dual image of Mahāśrī Tārā and Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā.
21. For a detailed iconography of Cakrasaṃvara, see Appendix II.

131

PĪTA JAMBHALA (TIB. DZAM BHA LA SER PO;  
pronounced Jambala serpo)

Tibet, Early Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth or thirteenth century

Sandalwood

H: 3" W: 2 1/4" D: 1"

Anonymous private collection

It is little known even among specialists that wood was one of the major media, if not *the* major medium, of Tibetan sculpture. Yet wooden sculpture is easily destroyed, and therefore has a low survival rate over the centuries. Further, whereas a small gold, silver, or copper alloy image is literally made of money, with highly negotiable ingots having been melted down to make the castings, a small piece of wood, once carved into an image, had no particular monetary value in the traditional open market. Accordingly, during the recent dislocations of the Tibetan peoples, vastly fewer wooden images were saved

1. An exception is the Maitreya image at Mulbekh, on the road between Srinagar and Leh. It appears, however, to have been made by Kashmiris.
2. Giuseppe Tucci, "A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style," *Artibus Asiae* 22, nos. 1-2 (1959): 179-187.
3. Probably Kāmaru.
4. Tucci, "Classification of Buddhist Images," 180.
5. Naming a commodity after an intermediate source is a fairly common occurrence. Consider the Chinese lacquer screens once popular in Europe and North America, which are known as "Coromandel screens," named for the southwestern coast of India where they were acquired from intermediate traders.
6. Tucci, "Classification of Buddhist Images," 180.
7. For cat. nos. 129 and 61, see Richard Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India: A Study of the Materials Used by Indian Sculptors from ca. 2nd century B.C. to the 16th century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, 1984), 17, 34-35, 68, 77, 84 (note that cat. no. 129 is incorrectly identified as Lokeśvara on p. 84). For cat. no. 62, see Newman, *The Stone Sculpture of India*, 35-36, 88, fig. 31. Phyllite is a term used to describe cleaved metamorphic rocks of fine texture. The term indicates a state of metamorphism rather than a mineralogical content and applies to stone that falls between schist and slate in its degree of fineness of structure. Phyllite that is near the "low-rank" end of the metamorphic sequence is strongly foliate (splits in parallel planes) and much resembles schist, while phyllite that is closer to the high-rank end of the metamorphic sequence closely resembles schist but is more finely textured. See Chester R. Longwell, Adolph Knopf, and Richard F. Flint, *Physical Geology* (New York and London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1948), 429. "Pyro" simply means that there has been heat in the metamorphic process. "It [phyllite] differs from slate in having a higher, glossy luster. Some phyllites [are] much like slate in appearance." (Longwell et al., *Physical Geology*, 575). Obviously, for these sculptures, the exceedingly fine grain is the important characteristic, since it allows the stone to be carved with such precision.
8. The Boston piece is unpublished. See Waldimir Zwalf, *Heritage of Tibet* (London: British Museum, 1981), 118, for the British Museum piece. Zwalf does not commit as to whether the piece is Tibetan or Indian. I would argue for its Tibetan origin on the basis of style.

or transported as objects of value. The numerous larger wooden images, were simply too big to transport easily and because they were made of wood also were considered to be of little or no value. Those that were transported were moved either because of their historical importance (we were shown "Nāgārjuna's own" image of Tārā at one monastery in the Dharamsala area) or because of their demonstrated efficacy in producing some benefit for practitioners. These important and powerful images have been preserved to the present in the temples and shrines of the exiled Tibetans. Thus, wooden sculpture is relatively rarely encountered in western collections, even though it was among the most popular of all sculptural media.

This little figure of Pīta Jambhala, one of the benefactor deities in the tantric pantheon, demonstrates the superior craftsmanship of the Tibetan carvers and is a relic suggestive of the all-but-lost wooden sculptural tradition of India.<sup>1</sup> Except for the treatment of the jewels of the crown, the conventions for the figure and its position and attitude are so close to the Pāla tradition as to be virtually identical. This may be seen by comparing it to a figure of Jambhala at Bargaon village at Nālandā (fig. 70). Only a few elements separate this figure from the Pāla idiom, such as the treatment of the gems in the crown as a combined teardrop shape and a circular motif, and the receptacle carved into

the bottom of the wooden piece to receive dedicatory materials.

Related to other wealth deities, such as Kubera, Vaiśravaṇa, and Pāṇcika, Jambhala is himself the center of a *maṇḍala* of eight prosperity deities.<sup>2</sup> Since a *maṇḍala* can be represented or abbreviated by portraying the central deity, it is generally assumed that an image of a central deity comprises the deities of the entourage as well.

The small teardrop-shaped object in Pīta Jambhala's right hand is a *cintāmaṇi*, or wish-granting gem,<sup>3</sup> which symbolizes material prosperity on one level and on another level the true treasure of the Buddhist teachings—the Dharma. The mongoose (Skt. *nakula*) in his left hand usually would be spitting forth similar gems and dropping them into pots below,<sup>4</sup> in essence creating a supply of gems to be distributed to Jambhala's devotees. The connection between the mongoose and the gems is that in the Indian cultural context, both in fact and fiction, the mongoose is a destroyer of snakes, or serpents (Skt. *nāgas*). Because the *nāgas* are the guardians of the underworld's store of treasure (both jewels and Dharma texts), after devouring the *nāgas* the mongoose regurgitates the jewels for the benefit of humankind.



Figure 70. Jambhala. Bargaon village, Nālandā, Bihar, India. Ca. ninth or tenth century.

1. In India, too, wood was the major medium; however, only a handful of Pāla-period wooden pieces have survived.
2. Mañibhadra (Tib. Nor bu bzang po), Ātavaka (Tib. 'Brog gnas), Saṃjñeya (Tib. Yang dag shes), Pāṇcika (Tib. Lnga rtsen), Pūrṇabhadra (Tib. Gang ba bzang po), Kubera (Tib. Lus ngan po), Jambhala, and Bijakuṇḍali (Tib. 'Jam po 'khyil ba). Lokesh Chandra, *Buddhist Iconography*, 2 vols. (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1987), 129-131, nos. 215-223. Among them, Mañibhadra, Pūrṇabhadra, Kubera, Jambhala, and Pāṇcika are all known to have had independent cults between the second century B.C. through the fourth or fifth century A.D.
3. This attribute is occasionally erroneously identified as a citron.
4. Some smaller sculptures omit this iconographic detail. Because of the loss of the front of the pedestal of this image, it is impossible to determine whether or not they were present in this sculpture. However, they are an important part of the iconography of Jambhala.

BOOK COVER (TIB. *KLEGS SHING*; pronounced Lek shing [SELF NAMED])

Tibet, Mang 'khar (Mang mKhar), western gTsang District, Tibetan Bal sku  
 Ca. first quarter of the thirteenth century, probably for a bKa' brgyud sect temple  
 Designed by Dharma master rDo rje seng ge (1152-1220)  
 Wood with traces of polychrome  
 H: 10 5/16" W: 27 1/2" D: 1 1/8"  
 Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Hofer Collection of the Arts of Asia (1978.515)

One of the most spectacular vehicles of woodcarving in the Tibetan cultural sphere was that provided by decorative book covers. The massive sets of the bKa' 'gyur (pronounced Kanjur; translations into Tibetan of the Buddhas' words) and bsTan 'gyur (pronounced Tanjur; translations of philosophical and exegetical works) were offered to monasteries as lavish gifts of patronage and devotion. Prior to the first printing of these great compilations in China under the Yongle Emperor (completed in 1411),<sup>1</sup> all such copies had been made by scribes, often using powdered gold as ink on deep blue paper. Complete sets of the canon were rarely offered because of the great cost involved, so generally a single volume of special significance or relevance to a particular situation might be offered. The making of an offering of the whole canon is still an elaborate undertaking, requiring many rooms of the monastery to be turned over to copyists, wood carvers, painters (if the title pages or the covers are to be illustrated), and garment-makers (for the cloth wrappings that cover the books), who all work at the same time.<sup>2</sup> Some of the larger monasteries had sets with elaborately carved covers, such as the one in the exhibition, produced in just such a manner. However, the inscription on the reverse implies that this book cover was for a single volume, apparently, a single volume of a *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* that was offered (probably as the consecration text for a local temple).

In the center of the cover is the Buddha-to-be enthroned on the Vajrāsana at the moment of his victory over Māra. In this context he represents the *summum bonum* of all Buddhist soteriological methodology and thus represents every Buddha. He is attended to his proper right (viewer's left) by Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of transcendental wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*), and to his left by Maitreya, the Bodhisattva of loving compassion (Skt. *maitrī*). This is not a standard pair of Bodhisattvas and may either represent some special teaching or the personal choice of the donor. Flanking the central group to the proper right (viewer's left) is *Prajñāpāramitā*, who has a tiny image of *Syāma Tārā* (also *Ārya Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā*

and *Khadiravaṇī Tārā*) emerging from behind her throne back and rising toward the central group.<sup>3</sup> To the proper left is an image of *Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara*, with a small image of *Pīta Jambhala* emerging from behind his throne.

To the far proper left is a form of *Acala*, while to the proper right is a rarely encountered form of *Vajrapāṇi* known in Tibetan as *Phyag rdor gtum chen bsrung ba'i mkhar ras chung lugs* (pronounced Chagdor tumchen sungway kharay chung luk; Skt. *Caṇḍamaharoṣaṇa Vajrapāṇi* "According to the system of Ras chung pa". The great master Ras chung pa (1083-1161), who was cured of leprosy by reciting the *mantra* of this deity,<sup>4</sup> was one of the great early disciples of *Mi la ras pa* and one of the Tibetans who successfully travelled to India, where he received teachings from *Tiphupa* (Tib. *Ti pu pa* or *Dar ma mdo sde*, active in the late eleventh and possibly early twelfth century), *Mar pa's son* and a direct disciple of both *Maitrīpa* and *Nāropa*. From *Nāropa* he received the secret *Ḍākinī*-whispered teaching lineage of *Cakrasaṃvara*, known as *bDe mchog snyan brgyud* (pronounced Demchok nyengyu). Ras chung pa transmitted the lineage to Tibet and is one of the most important figures in the bKa' brgyud lineages.<sup>5</sup> Because of the presence of a specialized form of *Vajrapāṇi* associated with Ras chung pa in the iconography of the cover, it is probable that the cover originally was made for a bKa' brgyud monastery.

The style of the cover is a relief interpretation of the Tibetan Bal sku (more properly called Bal shing sku, or "Nepali wood sculpture") school. While adhering to the overall iconometric dictates of the Shar mthun sku school in the portrayal of the figures and their iconography, the artists have elaborated the background, the ornamentation of the thrones, and the detailing of the throne backs in a manner derived from Nepali art of the same period. The result is essentially a translation of the paintings of the Tibetan Bal bris school into the relief sculpture of the woodcarver.

The reverse of the cover contains an inscription that is astonishing for its useful content. It contains the place where the patrons lived, the names of the patrons themselves (what is either a description of the female donor, part of her name, or the name of a second donor has been scraped away in a deliberate defacement), the names of the scribes, and the name of the designer of the cover decoration, the Dharma master rDo rje seng ge (1152-1220). This places the date of the covers securely in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, ostensibly a century too early for the current conventional wisdom of stylistic analysis but irrefutable and therefore a new benchmark in the dating of Tibetan art. What is perhaps even more interesting is that the book cover was made for someone from the Mang mkhar Valley. Presumably it was an offering for a small local temple or private family shrine, as there are no records or known remains of a major temple



in that region.

#### INSCRIPTION:

[Om Svasti!]<sup>6</sup> I bow to the Mother of Buddhas<sup>7</sup> and [to] the *bla mas* (lamas). [Regarding] this golden volume, which is a virtuous method,<sup>8</sup> I am going to tell a little bit about the qualities of the place it was produced and of the patron(s) and so forth. So listen with great joy! At the top is a beautiful snow mountain, and from there a stream of water (i.e., a river) flows. At the bottom is a wide field where crops ripen. That place is called Mang 'khar<sup>9</sup> and possesses many auspicious (qualities). There is a propitious, gladdening fortress, The devoted . . . [name erased] and beautiful and enchanting 'Bum rGyan<sup>10</sup> made good use of the wealth<sup>11</sup> (she [they?]) accumulated (i.e., by commissioning this book). . . . [2 line lacuna] . . . By two wise calligraphers, bKra shis and 'Kha re, the proper letters (i.e., handwriting) have been neatly and correctly written. On the *klegs shing* (wooden cover placed on top of the manuscript), (made of) good, well-hewn, smooth wood, attractive, appropriate images smile and look delighted and look like they are immediately going to speak to us. The images of animals are handsome, healthy-looking, and frolicsome. The decorative spirals (*pad tra*) are pretty and delightful and clearly delineated. The gold paint is pure, clear, rich (in color), and bright. [One] never gets one's fill of looking [at it]. The design of this wooden cover was done by the Dharma(-expert) and intelligent rDo rje seng ge. By the merit accumulated by this, may all sentient beings become Buddhas. Hurray! (dGe'o) Mangalam!<sup>12</sup>

1. The great printed editions that are so well known only began in Beijing with the Yongle era edition that was completed in 1411. In China it was simply part of the ongoing collection and publication of the canon that had been taking place since the Tang. In China there were also Kangxi and Qianlong era editions of the Tibetan collection. The major Tibetan editions were the sNar thang bKa' 'gyur 1731, and bsTan 'gyur of 1742, the Lhasa, sDe dge, bLa brang, sKu 'bum, and Co ne. Most bKa' 'gyur sets contain a hundred volumes (the sDe dge contains 108), while all known bsTan 'gyur sets contain 225 volumes.
2. The authors have witnessed one such event while doing research on Buddhist art in Ladakh. Even on the small scale of offering an already printed bKa' 'gyur and having to make only a hundred book covers and the "clothes" for them, workers had taken over several rooms in a small monastery in Basgo.
3. This is an important iconographic association. While there is a great deal of circumstantial evidence that the two are identical and that Śyāma Tārā is an emanation of Prajñāpāramitā, this is the first direct iconographic evidence that I know of that makes the point so explicitly.
4. *Blue Annals*, 437.
5. *Blue Annals*, 437-439.
6. A general wish for universal auspiciousness, damaged in the manuscript but always present in Tibetan religious inscriptions.
7. That is, Prajñāpāramitā.
8. For producing good *karma*.
9. The map spelling is Mang mkhar. It is at the eastern end of La stod.
10. Literally One Hundred Thousand Ornaments, a woman's name.
11. Literally, "took the essence," a colloquial expression meaning "put to good use."
12. Translated by Ngawang Jorden, of Sakya College, with Miranda Shaw.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PĀLA-DEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF METAL SCULPTURE IN TIBET AND CHINA

### EARLY TIBETAN METALWORKING

Metalworking apparently is an ancient part of Tibetan technology, traceable well into Tibetan prehistory.<sup>1</sup> Although early Tibetan metal objects are exceedingly difficult to date with certainty,<sup>2</sup> they apparently were made in both the prehistoric and protohistoric periods. These invariably small objects are variously known as *thog lcags* (pronounced thokchak), *thog rde'u* or *thog rdo* (pronounced thokde) and *mtho lding* (pronounced thoding). These names tell us much about the way the Tibetans view such objects. The first term translates as both "thunderbolt" and "meteoric iron;" the two English language concepts are synonymous in the Tibetan context. The second term means "heavenly pebble," i.e., a rock or stone from heaven, and the third term, "heavenly flying," means here "(object that) flew (from) heaven." While the word or connotation of "stone" is present in the various terms, the objects do not occur in stone *per se*. Indeed, most of those that I have seen are apparently native copper, brassy copper alloys, iron, and other unknown metals, but always metal.<sup>3</sup> The fact that they are "heavenly" or fallen from "heaven" means that they are conceived as supernatural in origin and thus as possessing extraordinary powers. Invariably *thog lcags* are prized by their owners as talismans of great importance regardless of their actual appearance or attractiveness and whether they are Buddhist in design or not.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the nature of early Tibetan metalworking, and however the tradition ultimately is dated, Tibet was characterized in Tang records as a place where the metalworkers performed wonders.<sup>5</sup> The Tibetans were especially famous for their gold work (apparently no early Tibetan gold work survives), swords, and armor. While no major study has yet been done on early Tibetan metalworking,<sup>6</sup> and very little in the way of excavated material has been published, Tibet still retains the aura of its lofty reputation. It is clear that when the Pāla style of metal image-making came to Tibet, it was received by highly skilled and technically knowledgeable craftsmen fully capable of utilizing the full range of alloying, casting, and finishing techniques known to the Indic craftsmen, and who even had a few skills that their Indic teachers did not. With such a tradition behind them, it is not surprising

that there are works of unsurpassed quality among even the earliest surviving Buddhist metal images.

The earliest Tibetan Buddhist metal sculptures that can be placed chronologically are those that most closely relate to the Pāla tradition.<sup>7</sup> Any dating of the Tibetan images depends on morphological comparison with the more accurately dated Pāla school material.<sup>8</sup> However, even with such excellent comparative data available, there is no way to determine how long a specific tradition survived in Tibet. This renders the dating of any given sculpture very uncertain. An object that morphologically appears to be twelfth century could be later, perhaps much later, and there is no way to know for certain.

### THE TRADITIONAL VIEW OF TIBETAN METAL SCULPTURE

Early Tibetan Buddhist metal sculpture undoubtedly has a history virtually identical to that of the painting schools, and it may safely be assumed that the same mechanisms of transportation of style and iconography were operative, with monks and pilgrims providing the principal vehicles of transmission. Unfortunately, apart from the style and iconography of the surviving images themselves, very little traditional information about metal images is known. Only in two sources identified by Tucci has anything like a classification come to light.<sup>9</sup> The salient features of the texts are summarized in the following.

The metals listed are:

1. *li*, *mkhar*, *khro*; all terms for what is usually translated as "bell metal" [a copper-based alloy of unspecified content, often called bronze but actually brass]
  - a. *khro*, considered to be the poorest quality [Das gives the information that *khro* is an inferior form of bronze and may be *khro nag*, or dark, in color. He states that this may also be called *lcags khro*, or "iron bronze," because there is a predominance of iron in the compound. He also identifies a *khro dkar* with more zinc and a *zangs khro* with more copper than iron.]<sup>10</sup>
  - b. *mkhar*, being an "alloy" of brass<sup>11</sup>

- c. *li* has three colors
  - 1) *dmār*, red (Skt. *rīṭī*, brass “bell metal”)
  - 2) *dkar*, white (Skt. *kāṁśya*, white copper, or brass “bell metal”)
  - 3) *khra [bo]*, “particolored” or variegated,<sup>12</sup> (also called *ji khyim*<sup>13</sup> and *dsai kṣim*), considered to be the best quality
    - a) it is either native copper (*zangs*) or
    - b) an alloy consisting of eight metals (Skt. *aṣṭadhātu*): gold,<sup>14</sup> silver, copper, white iron, rock crystal, white lead, black lead, mercury
2. *ra gan*, brass, also *ri ri ka* (= Skt. *rīrī*, or *rīrī*) and *rag*.  
 Brass is also known as *dri med*, *gser can*, *rtsibs bcas*, and *bzhu bya*. There are two kinds of brass, *mo rag* (literally “mother,” or “female,” brass), which is yellowish and soft, and *pho rag* (literally, “father,” or “male,” brass), which is whitish. The latter is identical with *rag skya*, or “plain brass.”
3. *zangs*, copper also known as *zangs dmar*, *klaklo kha* (Skt. *mlecchamukha*, *ljon dmar* (a variety of *ra gan*?), and *lcags dmar* (literally, “red iron,” but implying copper).<sup>15</sup>

This information was compiled by polymaths, intellectuals of sweeping and sometimes truly astonishing breadth of knowledge. However, there is little evidence that any such writer ever faced the practical aspects of actually observing, or working in, the foundries where such image-making was done. Thus, the information must be taken for what it is, educated Tibetans’ views of metals and alloys used for the casting of metal images. While the list of metals is both incomplete and relatively uninformative regarding specific alloys, it does contain useful information. First, the use of different colors of alloys is a foregone conclusion and brass, an alloy of copper and zinc, is assumed to be the predominant metal type. Secondly, although gold, silver, and iron are not mentioned as primary sculptural metals, they are clearly known, and as the list of eight elements (Skt. *aṣṭadhātu*) indicates, such materials as lead and mercury were also known to the metalworking ateliers. Finally, the texts indirectly provide evidence of the tremendous sophistication of both the alloying and metallurgical techniques (which neither of Tucci’s authors discuss), a sophistication that an empirical knowledge of alloying and the surviving images themselves attest. The following is a list of metals associated with regional styles as provided by Tucci:

Indian (rGya gar li sku)  
 Central (dBus li sku)

Eastern (Shar li sku)  
 Western (Nub li sku)  
 Northern (Byang li sku)  
 Southern (Lho li sku)  
 Upper Hor (Stod hor li sku)  
 Uigur (Yu gur li sku)  
 Tibet (Bod li sku)  
 Old Chinese (rGya rnying li sku)  
 Hor (Hor li sku)  
 New Chinese (rGya nag li sku or gRya ser ma li sku)  
 Made of three kinds of brass:  
 Li dkar, ?, and ?

According to one of Tucci’s texts, the Tibetan images are divided into three categories: former Chos rgyal (Dharma kings), intermediate Chos rgyal, and later Chos rgyal. The Chos rgyal, or Dharma kings, to which he refers are: Srong brtsan sgam po (pronounced Songtsen Gampo; reigned 629-650), Khri strong lde brtsan (pronounced Trisong Detsen; reigned 755-780), and Ral pa can (pronounced Ralpachen; reigned 823-840). A fourth type of image is associated with the time of Lha and bTsun. Tucci has identified these individuals as Lha bla ma ye shes ‘od and bTsun byang chub ‘od. These are the well-known tenth-century kings of Gu ge, uncle and nephew, who invited Atiśa to Tibet and inaugurated the Second Propagation. He describes the images made during their time as made of red copper, finished with fire gilding (with gold from Zhang Zhung), and resembling those of the Nepalis.<sup>16</sup> Dagyal’s source adds that the Gu ge kings commissioned many statues of *li dmar* (red *li*), which resembled their Indic prototypes so closely in style that they were mistaken for them.<sup>17</sup>

This traditional account helpfully identifies four indigenous classifications of early images, but the chronology that it provides is too highly compressed and reverses the actual sequence at points. Further, some of the descriptions are incomprehensible without reference to the designated images.<sup>18</sup> However, some of the information is invaluable, such as the general comparison of the images made during the time of Ral pa can to those of Indian artists of central India and the description that they are made of *li dkar*, “white brass,” of a type known as *rtsod pa med*.<sup>19</sup> This would appear to be an accurate general description of the medium of an image of Tārā in this exhibition (cat. no. 150). If this is the case, then the “later Chos rgyal” images can actually be assigned to the eleventh and twelfth centuries and to the Second Propagation. Copper images with heavy gilding in the Nepali manner describes several image types of the fourteenth through nineteenth centuries when the Newari artisans established workshops in both Lhasa and gTsang District.

When this information about the metal images is juxtaposed with the history of Tibetan painting, a pattern

emerges from the rather nebulous traditional historical descriptions. It is evident that sculptural styles followed the same sequence seen in painting. At first there was a mixed style showing diverse influences, followed by a period of relatively strict adherence to Indic prototypes, followed in turn by a period of copying Nepali models. The anachronistic dates notwithstanding, Tucci's anonymous author has at least confirmed an awareness of what one observes in the development of metal images in the Tibetan heartland. Tucci locates two important casting workshops, at Gu ge in the west and rTa nag in north gTsang District. To this I must add Shol in Lhasa and the Nepali cantonment in Lhasa. Numerous other metalworking centers undoubtedly existed, but the information has not come to light.

More technical information is inherently encoded in the metal images themselves and falls within the province of the archaeological chemist. Chandra Reedy of the University of Delaware has developed a process of detecting and categorizing trace elements in the core materials and the alloys of the images that eventually may make possible a solidly based regional classification. The alloys were subject to extreme variation depending on what materials were available to the craftsmen. However, the core materials were refractory clays that could be obtained locally and consistently from large local deposits. Thus, it is the core materials that provide the most informative patterns of trace elements. When it becomes possible to collect and test materials in Tibet proper, definitive judgments about places of origin can be made.

#### THE SHAR MTHUN SKU SCHOOL

In order to clearly explain and illustrate the necessarily technical stylistic definitions that will be presented for the first time in this catalogue, I have adapted the traditionally established nomenclature of painting to the sculpture. Shar mthun, "Agreeing with the East," is used to modify *sku* (pronounced ku), "image," "body," or "figure," a term used to designate images produced sculpturally. The Shar mthun sku school of Tibetan sculpture is the school that most closely follows the Pāla school. The traditional classifications of Tibetan metal images recognized this reliance and noted the difficulty of distinguishing between Tibetan images and their Indian prototypes.<sup>20</sup> Image-makers travelling to Tibet and Tibetans travelling to Indic regions respectively taught and learned firsthand the craft of casting metal images within similar iconomorphic constraints as those seen in painting techniques.

At our chronological and historical distance, the key question is determining which images are Pāla and which are Tibetan in origin. The best of the earliest Second Propagation Shar mthun sku school of metal images are only marginally distinguishable from those of Pāla regions. Indeed, many have been identified by previous authors on

the subject as "Indian,"<sup>21</sup> especially as being from "Bengal," presumably meaning (but not directly stated by any author of which I am aware) the trans-Gangetic basin from modern Bhagalpur District in India to Bangladesh. These attributions are incorrect for several reasons.

One of the best indicators of provenance is metal. Most Tibetan metal alloys differ from those of India. Although a chemical analysis of every alloy of every image in the exhibition was not possible for various logistical reasons, an examination and careful recording of metal color, which results from the composition of the alloy, provides a body of indispensable reference material.<sup>22</sup> However, other evidences of place of production exist in some profusion. Different kinds of inlaying, inseting of stones, types of stones, modeling of wax prior to casting, and finishing techniques such as chasing (hammering lines and designs into the surface with a tool), chiseling (actually cutting away pieces of metal to sharpen details in the casting), burnishing (polishing with a hard substance, usually an agate), and gilding all aid in discerning the Tibetan hand in the manufacture of metal images. These techniques shall be discussed with the appropriate examples.

#### THE TRANSITIONAL AND LATE SHAR MTHUN SKU SCHOOLS

As in the case of painting, what makes Transitional Shar mthun sku transitional is the fact that non-Pāla and post-Pāla elements are found in many of the images, while others show clear signs of the integration of Tibetan idioms and have departed from the Pāla conventions. Unlike painting, these sculptural styles are remarkably consistent. The majority of changes seem to have occurred in gTsang Valley workshops that were patronized by the Sa skya pas. However, there is no indication of sectarian divisions in metal image-making as there were in painting. This may be because the metalworking apparently was concentrated in the hands of a few highly skilled craftsmen or a few workshops where the specialized equipment and technology was available, while painting appears to have been a craft that virtually anyone who wished to do so could study and practice. The sociological basis of this phenomenon is unclear, but it may be that because the metalworkers had an ancient, conservative, almost ritualistic tradition in Tibet, it was simply not something that anyone individually could choose to do. Whether membership depended upon one's family, class, or an initiation or even meant following a lowly and despised occupation is not presently known. Whatever the reason, stylistic changes were fewer and of more limited impact than the stylistic innovations of the painting schools.

The use of the designation of Transitional Shar mthun sku is still intended convey a predominantly Pāla figurative convention, although influences from Nepal are also



generally found. It is likely that other artistic sources, such as the Buddhist centers in Orissa in India, also played a role in the formulation of the Transitional Shar mthun sku. Usually modification of crown types, jewelry details, and the minor figures appear in new syntheses. Identification of these elements demands careful scrutiny and comparative analysis with Bihari, Bengali, Orissan, and Nepali images. The disseminators of new stylistic information to Tibet were probably the Newari craftsmen who began to formulate images in the desired styles for their Tibetan patrons as early as the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. There is also considerable evidence that the elaborate styles of late Kashmiri metalworking had considerable effect on the styles of gTsang and that the style quickly became a Tibetan synthesis, deeply rooted in the Pāla tradition but rapidly and almost eagerly absorbing visual enrichments that expanded the Pāla repertoire of ornamentation.

Transitional and Late Shar mthun sku images represent a veritable golden age of Tibetan metalworking. The superb skill, spectacular ornamentation, and overall impression of visual richness of the finest images from this period are truly remarkable. The waxes are exquisitely crafted, with great attention to exceedingly subtle surface modeling and infinitesimal ornamental detailing. The images are finely cast. In contrast to earlier Tibetan metal images, which are often marred by casting flaws and have plugs in their surfaces to compensate for holes formed by unfilled sections of the mold, these images are perfectly cast. Lastly they are smoothly finished and richly ornamented with semiprecious and precious stones. These works display an assurance of treatment and an inner maturity of conception that demonstrate a complete command of the stylistic conventions and their full integration into the Tibetan artistic milieu. While still strongly indebted to the Pāla idiom, the Tibetan founders had reached their own period of ascendancy.

#### LATER PĀLA-DEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF METAL SCULPTURE

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, two interconnected and artistically important sociopolitical phenomena occurred. First, with the ascendancy of the Sa skya sect under Mongol patronage, direct Chinese artistic influence came in the form of gifts to the temples from the Mongol emperors and later from the Yuan court. Secondly, there was such tremendous pressure on the Tibetan artisans to produce new works that large numbers of craftsmen were imported from Nepal. While these artists attempted to reproduce the Pāla idiom for the Tibetans, many Nepali influences shaped the Tibetan artistic conventions. Despite these Chinese and Nepali influences, the basic Pāla iconometric models survived without modification. The sculptures discussed in the following section evidence the

familiar Pāla idioms enhanced by enriched and more elaborate surface treatments and manifesting an ever-increasing level of skill on the part of the craftsmen. In addition, presumably due to the new prosperity of the Tibetan sects under the patronage of the Mongols, the creation of gold and silver images became frequent, if not commonplace. While the tradition of creating images in brass continued until about the sixteenth or seventeenth century, especially under the Sa skya pas, fire-gilded copper or copper-alloy images<sup>23</sup> become the *de facto* standard.<sup>24</sup>

It is at this point in the history of the development of Tibetan metal images that regional attribution of specific images because almost impossible.<sup>25</sup> Transmission of designs in art is facilitated by the use of printed patterns. It may be that such patterns for metal images existed, although none have come to my attention. However, judging from the process of design transmission in pictorial art, the schools that developed were founded on iconometric conventions rather than what a Western art historian would call a stylistic convention. Therefore the ornamentation, detailing, and minor nonanatomical and iconographic features were afforded a full range of variation within the religiously and sociologically contextual limitations. Accordingly, the fourteenth through late fifteenth centuries was a period of great variety and vigor in the Tibetan metal sculptural tradition.

#### CHINESE AND SINO-TIBETAN PĀLA-DEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Pāla metal-image styles reached China by two main paths.<sup>26</sup> The first consisted of Indic influence in what is now southwestern China in the region of Yunnan (see cat. no. 88) as part of the transmission of Pāla culture through Southeast Asia. The second was the direct influence on the Mongol empire and subsequent Yuan dynasty through continued political and religious ties with the Sa skya sect of Tibet, and through artists, especially Anige (the Nepali artist attached to the entourage of Phags pa during his sojourn at the Mongol and later Yuan court). In both cases, the style was introduced because it was considered authoritative in a religious sense. The impact of the Pāla stylistic influence in Yunnan and at the Mongol/Yuan courts differed greatly. The Dali kingdom of Yunnan was a small, somewhat isolated local kingdom that looked both to India and China as cultural centers, and which was also integrally related to cultural developments in Southeast Asia. The Pāla-derived image type that developed there had no known effect outside the Yunnan region. In contrast, the influence of the Sa skya sect and Anige at the Mongol courts affected the rulers of greater China until this century. Anige supervised some of the great temple-building projects and thereby exerted a stylistic influence that profoundly altered Buddhist art in China, as seen at monuments far outside of Anige's purview. The Yuan-

period sculptures at the Feilaifeng near Hangzhou<sup>27</sup> and the 1342-1345 Zhuyong guan (Chuyung Kuan), a "gate" across the old road north out of Beijing, also followed the style and stand as monuments to Tibetan influence on the Buddhist arts of China.

Unfortunately, the study of this later material is hindered by a conviction held by historians of Chinese art that nothing of importance happened in Buddhist art after the Song dynasty. One author states that: "Buddhist art from the eleventh to the end of the thirteenth century was in the last important phase of its development on Chinese soil. . . . nothing that was at once new and of artistic significance was added."<sup>28</sup> The same author continues with an opinion on Tibetan-based styles: "The sculpture of the Tibetan church was an already highly formalized derivation from the images of Bihar, in India, and of Nepal. Bound, if not strangled, by rigid adherence to a complex iconography, the art of Lamaism was ill suited to the temperament of Chinese craftsmen."<sup>29</sup> This widely held view does an injustice to some important developments within and fine examples of Chinese Buddhist art. Iconographically limited though they might be, there are few who could deny the aesthetic merits of the Sino-Tibetan image of Śaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara (cat. no. 156), the Sino-Tibetan attendant Bodhisattva (cat. no. 159), or the Sino-Tibetan image of Virūpa (cat. no. 160). Examples like these demonstrate that Yuan and Ming Buddhist sculpture has the aesthetic quality of the best work of earlier periods.

Under the Qing, or Manchu, dynasty (1644-1911), the relationship with Tibet continued, with the imperial house supporting the dGe lugs sect of Tibetan Buddhism. For reasons unknown at present but probably related to the intellectual eclecticism of Rol pa'i rdo rje, the lCang skya Qutuqtu, Pāla sculptural styles underwent a great revival. While these images are dry and somewhat stilted,<sup>30</sup> they nevertheless reflect an ongoing desire for the authentic, or original, image, and this in Tibetan terms meant the Pāla artistic tradition.

1. Tibet as a source of gold is mentioned by the Greek historian Herodotus.
2. Dating is so imprecise that I prefer to use "Buddhist period" to refer to those of obviously Buddhist subjects and "possibly pre-Buddhist period" for those of non-Buddhist subject matter. Until archaeological evidence or reliably dated material emerges, questions about the dating of early Tibetan metal objects cannot be resolved.
3. For published examples of *thog lcags*, see Giuseppe Tucci, *Transhimalaya. Archaeologia Mundi Series* (Geneva: Nagel Publishers, 1973), pls. 1-32. Although many of the examples published by Tucci are worn almost beyond recognition, a few still show glimmers of very high-quality craftsmanship. Over the years I have seen a total of about a thousand of these objects; they range in style from reflecting extensions of the Central Asian "Animal style" to relatively late, ca. twelfth or thirteenth century, Buddhist objects.
4. One *thog lcags*, probably a button or clothing ornament, that I was once shown vaguely resembled either a *khyang* (Skt. *garuḍa*) or some sort of raptor. It was considered to be a talisman deliberately dropped by a local *sa bdag* (the animate spirit of a locale) and to have had great effectiveness in overcoming evil forces.
5. Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang*

- Exotics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), 254. In 640, among the things the Tibetan king Srong brtsan sgam po gave his future father-in-law, Tang Taizong, was a set of golden vessels; in 641 he sent the Chinese emperor a seven-foot-tall golden wine jug in the shape of a goose. Later, in 658, in an exchange after Tang Taizong's death, "the Tibetans sent . . . a golden city, populated by golden horsemen, and figures of horses, lions, elephants, and other animals" (Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, 254).
6. One exception is Loden Sherap Daggyab, *Tibetan Religious Art*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), vol. 1, 50-51. Unfortunately, this study appears to be flawed by much misinformation. For example, it contains a brief account of piece-mold casting and states that it was the more prevalent technique. The number of images obviously cast by the lost-wax process seems to contradict that statement. Daggyab goes on to say: "For some cast statues it may sometimes be necessary to provide a hollow to serve as the container for sacred fillings. This is done by placing a squarish lump of the moistened mud on the inside of the back surface of the mould which will then create a hollow space when the metal is poured around it" (p. 51). His information, traditional though it may be, is incorrect and even dangerous if applied. Molten metal poured around a "moistened mud" lump will react violently to the water and could spatter or even explode. While the casting may have been done in cold molds, the molds *must* be dry! Further, usually a lost-wax casting is done when the wax is burned out of the mold and while the mold is still hot. The best fill of the mold will be done at different temperatures for different alloys but a fully filled, highly detailed mold is almost certainly the result of "hot casting." Daggyab's account is seriously marred by this lack of understanding of the technical process and of the techniques themselves. His English technical terms are usually wrong, and the accounts he gives, translated from Tibetan, reflect this ignorance. However, he does show a collection of metalworking tools (pls. 67-73) of fairly obvious types that are not, to the best of my knowledge, published anywhere else. As these tools are all nineteenth or twentieth century, some of them of obvious Euro-American commercial design, it is impossible to state which or what types were used by traditional craftsmen in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
  7. Undoubtedly there are also Kashmiri-style images of Tibetan manufacture from about the same date. Unfortunately, there is a tendency for writers to attribute all "Kashmiri style" images to Kashmir proper, and therefore those that may be from the Tibetan cultural sphere have not been identified. There are also Buddhist *thog lcags* that may be earlier, but as noted above the dating of these objects is highly problematic.
  8. For the extensive corpus of dated images from the Pāla and related schools of art, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 27-80, figs. 26-85.
  9. Giuseppe Tucci, "A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style," *Artibus Asiae* 22, nos. 1-2 (1959): 179-187.
  10. Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* (1902; reprint, Alipore, West Bengal: Superintendent Government Printing, West Bengal Government Press, 1960), 175. It must be noted that Das is inconsistent in his use of the terms brass and bronze. From my experience, the term brass is more appropriate to objects of Tibetan manufacture while "bronze" is generally appropriate to objects of Chinese manufacture.
  11. Brass itself is an alloy of copper and zinc. "Alloy" refers to a combination of elemental metals and not to combinations of alloys.
  12. The term *khra* [bo] suggest the effect of seeing two or more colors from a distance. Thus a French pointillist painting or a printed four-color color plate would be *khra bo*.
  13. As Tucci notes, this is a loan word from the Chinese *chijin* (ch'ih chin). Tucci, "A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style," 180, n. 2.
  14. Gold occurs very sparingly in the alloys. Later Tibetan craftsmen used a special tool with a core of gold, silver, and other metals to scrape off a tiny portion of the metals into the alloying crucible to thus insure that a casting would have the necessary gold in it. Actual amounts of gold used were probably in the .01 to .0001 gram range.
  15. Summarized from Tucci, "A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style," 180-181, with addenda from various lexicons.
  16. Tucci, "A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style," 186.
  17. Daggyab, *Tibetan Religious Art*, 56.
  18. A typical description is that the "lips [are] accurate, the shape good, body big, hands and feet soft." (Tucci, "A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style," 185). Appreciative though they may be, such descriptions provides little useful information.
  19. Literally meaning "not quarrelsome" or "without argument", but the implications are not clear.
  20. Daggyab, *Tibetan Religious Art*, 56.
  21. Publications by art dealers and auction catalogues are notably "generous" in their attribution of works to India rather than Tibet.
  22. Unfortunately, even the best color photographs and reproductions can fail miserably in the attempt to study metal color. Compare cat. no. 135 to its

color reproduction in John C. Huntington, "Three Essays on Himalayan Metal Images," *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983): 416-425. The photograph in *Apollo* virtually obliterates the distinction between the two colors of metal that make the image so important.

23. After the copper-alloy image is made and detailed by chasing and chiseling, it is cleaned in a mild acid, and an amalgam of finely powdered gold mixed with mercury is applied to the surface. When the image is then heated, the mercury vaporizes and in the process the gold is bonded—actually fused—to the surface of the copper alloy. When the amalgam is applied heavily, and the whole process repeated a number of times, the technique can produce a relatively thick layer of gold. Some of the finest examples made with this process (cat. no. 159), appear from a surface examination to be virtually solid gold.
24. There are, of course, well-known fire-gilded images from Pāla sites, for example the image of Avalokiteśvara from Kurkihār (fig. 75, illustrated with cat. no. 144). However, they are very few in number and the gilding technology, which will not work on brass, appears not to have been transferred to Tibet with other Indic metalworking processes. In addition, there are records of solid gold images. None of these are known in India; however, in various parts of Southeast Asia gold images survive in some numbers.
25. With the exception of western Tibetan brasses and Sino-Tibetan bronzes from Khams and Chinese workshops. However, neither of these styles concern us in the context of this catalog.
26. It is also possible that Pāla influence reached China by other means, for example through Central Asia via India's northwest, or by the sea routes through the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. However, in spite of the likelihood of influence by these paths, the surviving art of China reveals little information about such interactions.
27. For an up-to-date study see Richard Edwards, "Pu-tai-Maitreya and a Reintroduction to Hangchou's Fei-lai-feng," *Ars Orientalis* 14 (1984): 5-50.
28. Stated by Laurence Sickman in Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China*, paperback based on 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), 201.
29. Sickman, *The Art and Architecture of China*, 201. My italics.
30. Other images of the period in lacquer and wood are anything but dry and stilted. Unfortunately they do not necessarily reflect the Pāla idioms and therefore lie outside the purview of this catalogue.

133

# BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA)

Tibet, Early Shar mthun sku

Ca. late eleventh or early twelfth century

Copper alloy with copper and silver inlays (untested)

H: 4" W: 3" D: 1 3/4"

Pritzker Collection

The Himalayan and Chinese images of the Buddha in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* in the exhibition demonstrate a kind of "pilgrim's progress" of both stylistic continuity and evolution of the Pāla type of image in northern Asia. This image displays an obvious dependence upon Pāla configurations to the degree that there are those in the academic and collecting communities that would argue for an Indic origin for the piece. Details of the face, robe, and lotus base all demonstrate its affinity with the schools of eastern India and Bangladesh. Yet the method of closure of the base, the less carefully modeled detailing of the reverse, and the type of inlay using a slightly lighter alloy of copper to outline the folds of the robe and details of the base are all evidence of its Tibetan origin.

Perhaps the two most distinctively Tibetan features of this image are the treatment of the beads around the base and the overall quality of the craftsmanship. The

softly modeled small beads around the base are a characteristically Tibetan feature. When this bead motif occurs on Indic metal images, the beads are distinctively rendered in a very three-dimensional manner, suggesting that each one was rolled as a separate ball of wax and applied to the model of the piece to be cast. Most Tibetan pieces, like this image, are created from a band of wax around the base that has then been worked with a sharp tool to create the illusion of beading. The result, while similar in outward appearance, is easy to identify upon close examination. Further, the refinement and subtlety of modeling are notable. Such details as the inlaid drapery folds are a tour de force demonstrating skills that apparently came to Tibet with Kashmiri brass sculptural techniques and that found their way into the Tibetan Pāla-dependent image at an early date.

This and another early Buddha in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* (cat. no. 135) exhibit a close adherence to the same iconometric canons of proportion that apply to the paintings. It is not known how these were translated from a two-dimensional scheme to a three-dimensional image; however, the regularity of these pieces suggests that some form of measurement was in use.<sup>1</sup> Since the modeling of the original wax uses different techniques than are found in Pāla images, it is probable that while there might have been Indian wax-modelers in Tibet at the inception of the tradition, these and most other pieces were done by artisans perhaps several generations removed from the Indian masters who introduced the style into Tibet.

1. Several possible techniques might have been used. In south Indian metalworking, elaborate systems of folding various lengths of palm leaf are used in measurement. In Tibet, string or another available flexible material might have been used. On the other hand, modern Tibetans sculptors whom I have closely observed engaged in the making of butter sculpture, which is a process virtually identical to wax modeling, use no measurement system at all, but simply model the images from memory on the basis of their traditional training. However, it may be assumed that in the early Tibetan attempts to adhere closely to a newly learned style, some measurement method was used.

134

MAITREYA (TIB. BYAMS PA; pronounced Jampa)

Tibet, Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth century

Brass with silver and copper inlays (untested)

H: 2 3/4" W: 1 5/8" D: 1 5/8"

Collection of Douglas McDougall, New York

Virtually identical to Pāla prototypes and with a Sanskrit inscription in an Indic script (fig. 71), this small image of Maitreya (Tib. Byams pa) might easily be mistaken for a Pāla image.<sup>1</sup> Yet the basic metal type, the method of hammering in the closure of the base, and various details

of the sculptural technique identify the casting and workmanship as Tibetan. Such features as the unfinished backs of the attributes and the chased detailing of the hair are also characteristically Tibetan. Moreover, the beading around the base was created in the wax by the characteristically Tibetan carved method rather than the Indic applied wax-bead technique. From a cultural standpoint, one revealing feature is the curious and apparently mistaken placement of the sacred thread so that it passes across the upturned heel of the proper right foot. In the traditional Indic context, the sacred thread is a sign of being an initiated member of the highest, or *brāhmaṇa*, caste. It is unthinkable that it should touch the ritually unclean sole of the foot. This feature alone would disclose a certain distance from the viable Pāla tradition.



Figure 71. Inscribed base of cat. no. 134.

One unbelievably minute detail of the construction of this piece demonstrates conclusively the attention paid to surface details by this school. A close scrutiny of the head reveals a flower over the right ear, symbolizing initiation by *Ḍākinīs*. A tiny hole over the proper left ear indicates where a similar flower was attached. The flower itself is about one-eighth of an inch in diameter and was individually cast and attached to the piece. This devotion to so small an element that most people looking at the image wouldn't even notice it demonstrates meticulous attention to detail and also the technical mastery to carry out the demands of intricate iconographic programs.

The inscription has been read and translated by Dr. B. N. Mukherjee as follows: "*Dānapatisya/ Krādeyadharmmo/ śrī-Vantrāsya* (The religious gift of the illustrious Vantrā, the *Dānapati* ('lord of gifts,' a Buddhist title))."<sup>2</sup> The inscription is written in incorrect Sanskrit in the proto-Bengali or Gauḍī script of about the twelfth century. The presence of the Indic script probably indicates

that one of the Tibetans who knew Sanskrit felt that the original and "true" language of Buddhism was appropriate for making the inscription or that an Indian monk in Tibet commissioned the image and had the inscription written in the language that he understood. No Vantrā or related name for which this might have been an abbreviation has come down to us from the Tibetan chronicles.

For a discussion of closed bases in Pāla metal imagery, see cat. no. 49.

1. The image is extremely close to an image found at Pātharghātā near what is now believed to be the site of Vikramaśīla monastery. See Rakhal Das Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series 47 (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933), pl. 71i.
2. Personal correspondence.

135

### BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA)

Tibet, mixed Shar mthun sku and Kha che sku; *zangs thang ma* technique

Ca. second half of eleventh or early twelfth century  
Brassy copper alloy with copper and silver inlays and overlays (untested)

H: 5 5/8" W: 4 1/4" D: 2 1/2"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.89)

Illustrated in color

Originally mistakenly published as of Myanmari (Burmese) manufacture,<sup>1</sup> this exquisitely crafted figure demonstrates the true virtuosity of the Tibetan metalworker. Combining Kashmiri and Tibetan techniques with features of the Pāla style,<sup>2</sup> the image survives as a rare example of what may have been a very short-lived idiom in which images were fabricated out of two different colors of metal. Pad ma dkar po (1526-1592), the great Tibetan 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud polymath, describes an image type known as *zangs thang ma*,<sup>3</sup> in which the body of the figure is made of both *li dkar* (white brass) and *li dmar* (red brass).<sup>4</sup> This image matches the description so perfectly that it serves to identify the two metals featured in the definition. The lighter "white brass" refers to the metal seen in the bright yellow, almost golden-colored portion of the image. This type of metal is widely used throughout early Tibetan metalwork. The "red brass" is the metal used for the robes and must be nearly pure copper. This color of brass is derived from Kashmiri metallurgical techniques that were imported into Tibet in the eleventh century and is quite distinctive. The image confirms the accuracy of Pad ma dkar po's statement, while the statement in turn explicitly



locates the image within the Tibetan tradition. Further, it may be suggested that the image is from the Sa skya heartland of the gTsang Valley because the “white brass” of the body juxtaposed with the vividly contrasting “red brass” of the robe strongly suggests an attempt to evoke the red-robed attire of the Sa skya hierarchs.<sup>5</sup>

The style of the image successfully and thoroughly integrates features from both the Kashmiri and Pāla traditions. The figure of the Buddha and the cushion on which he sits are highly reminiscent of an image found at Fatehpur near Bodh Gayā.<sup>6</sup> However, the pedestal resembles those found on Kashmiri brass images, although no closely parallel Kashmiri Buddha is known at this time. While the combination of the two styles might seem problematic, it is only the actual figure of the Buddha that is dictated by the iconometric texts. Such details as the throne, the lotus, and cushion are left to the aesthetic conventions of a particular school or workshop of artisans. It is in these seemingly minor details that the greatest innovation took place in Tibetan art, and therefore it is upon them that a great deal of art historical attention naturally dwells. With Atiśa’s proselytization in Tibet the Kashmiri idiom fell into disuse and Pāla stylistic conventions came into predominance. However, the skill of the artists in the Kashmiri techniques would not immediately have been forgotten or abandoned. Thus, patrons may have had one or two generations of opportunity to combine the refined aesthetics of the Kashmiri school with the authoritative iconometrics of the Pāla schools.

#### PUBLISHED:

Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd—Part 2* (New York: The Asia Society, 1975), 29, 33, no. 12; The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 43; John C. Huntington, “Three Essays on Himalayan Metal Images,” *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 416–418, pl. 4.

1. Sherman E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd—Part 2* (New York: The Asia Society, 1975), 29 and 33. Lee based his attribution on a mistake made by Pratapaditya Pal, “The Story of a Wandering Bronze Buddha—and Two American Examples,” *The Connoisseur* 181, nos. 1–2 (1972): 203–207. Among other obvious problems with the Myanmar attribution is the fact that the brassy metal is unknown in Myanmar.
2. A detailed analysis of this image is provided in John C. Huntington, “Three Essays on Himalayan Metal Images,” *Apollo*, n.s., 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 416–419.
3. The meaning of *thang ma* in this term is obscure. It might mean “copper-surfaced.” The image that Dagzyab illustrates as *zangs thang ma* is neither in the Pāla tradition nor is it actually made of two alloys, as defined by the text and illustrated by the image under discussion here. See Loden Sherap Dagzyab, *Tibetan Religious Art*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), 52, pl. 75.
4. Pad ma dkar po’s description is cited in Giuseppe Tucci, “A Tibetan

Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style,” *Artibus Asiae* 22, nos. 1–2 (1959), 181 n. 6.

5. Originally I believed that the most probable place of origin was in western Tibet (Gu ge) or Ladakh. However, after an extensive study of Sa skya painting undertaken since the *Apollo* article cited above was written, I have discovered the importance attached to the red robe by the Sa skya pas in particular. This feature, coupled with the very high quality of the workmanship, which presumably would be the result of wealthy patronage such as the Khon family (the hereditary Sa skya abbots) could have provided, suggests a gTsang District origin under high-level Sa skya pa patronage.
6. See S. Huntington, *The “Pāla-Senā” Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 191. Also illustrated in my “Three Essays on Himalayan Metal Images,” fig. 2.

136

MAÑJUŚRĪ (TIB. ‘JAM DBYANGS; pronounced Jamyang)

Tibet, Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth century

Copper alloy (untested; probably nearly pure copper) with red, yellow, and blue pigment

H: 9 7/8" W: 4 3/4" D: 4 3/4"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates Purchase (M.75.4.10)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Mañjuśrī (Tib. ‘Jam dbyangs, pronounced Jamyang) may be identified by the book (Tib. *po ti* or *dpe cha*; Skt. *pustaka*), invariably a Prajñāpāramitā text, signifying his wisdom, resting on the proper left lotus. This is the same long, narrow, loose-leaf type of book from which the manuscript pages and cover in the exhibition come (cat. nos. 57–60, 89–90). The crown, with its triangular ornaments representing the five transcendent knowledges (Skt. *jñāna*) of an enlightened being demonstrate that Mañjuśrī is a fully enlightened Bodhisattva, or a Mahāsattva Bodhisattva.

This image probably was an attendant figure to a central figure, presumably a Buddha, as indicated by the fact that the figure of the Bodhisattva is bending to the right in the thrice-bent, or *tribhaṅga*, posture and the base of the image is not finished but is simply a roughly cut off ovoid tenon (roughly following the shape of the lotus petals), suggesting that it was intended to be inserted into a larger pedestal.

This piece is so close in style to the twelfth-century northern Bengal metal sculpture idiom that the piece has been identified previously as of the Pāla period. Yet in spite of its close resemblance to the Pāla idiom in elements such as costume, headdress, facial features, and the overall configuration, a number of details point to Tibetan manufacture. The metal, the somewhat schematized appearance of the back, and the treatment of the details of

the attributes and jewelry all suggest Tibetan workmanship.

PUBLISHED:

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 76, no. 73; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 286-287, pl. 71D; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, vol. 2, 700-1800 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art with University of California Press, 1988), 206-207, no. 102.

137

UNIDENTIFIED ATTENDANT BODHISATTVA

Tibet, Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth or early thirteenth century

Unidentified alloy presumably of copper (Tib. *khro nag?*)

H: 12" W: 4" D: 2"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

With both attributes lost through breakage of the metal, a specific identification of this Bodhisattva is impossible. The stalk of the lotus rising to the point of the left shoulder could have supported virtually any attribute, while the stafflike device in the right hand might have been the handle of a yak-tail fly-whisk (Skt. *caurī* or *cāmara*) or any one of several other attributes. Thus, all that can be iconographically determined is that the figure is probably a compassion (Skt. *karuṇā*) Bodhisattva, as indicated by the pile of matted hair (Skt. *jaṭāmukuṭa*).

The dark color of the metal is rarely encountered in early Tibetan metal images<sup>1</sup> and is unknown thus far in India. Its alloy composition would be a matter of great interest. The metal is probably appropriately termed *khro nag*, or black brass, but whether it is alloyed with lead, silver, or some other light-colored metal is undeterminable until a sample can be tested.<sup>2</sup> In style the piece is markedly based on the Bengali tradition. However, the chiseled finishing of the jewelry, the chased flowers in the *dhotī*, the less carefully formed details of the *jaṭāmukuṭa*, and the sparsely finished back all demonstrate the Tibetan origin of the figure.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Indo-Asian Art From The John Gilmore Ford Collection* (Baltimore, Maryland: Walters Art Gallery, 1971), 48-49, no. 66.

1. It is, however, quite common in later images from eastern Tibet and the Sino-Tibetan areas of Gansu, Qinghai, and western Sichuan.
2. For discussion of metal types, see Giuseppe Tucci, "A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style" *Artibus Asiae* 22, nos. 1-2 (1959): 179-187.

138

MAÑJUŚRĪ (TIB. 'JAM DBYANGS; pronounced Jamyang)

Tibet, Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth century

Brassy appearing copper alloy (untested) with cold gilding and blue pigment

H: 10 1/2" W: 3" D: 2 3/4"

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roger Stoll (1983.554.2)

Although exhibiting numerous Tibetan technical characteristics, such as the metal type and certain details of the style and carving of the jewelry, this image of Mañjuśrī (Tib. 'Jam dbyangs; pronounced Jamyang) shows close affiliations with the Pāla style. The full-figured anatomy, the *dhotī* with its asymmetrical hemline, and the wide hips are particularly reminiscent of an image of Balarāma dated in the ninth year of the Pāla king Devapāla (ca. 821) (fig. 72).<sup>1</sup> Some of the other features, such as the structure of the flowers behind the ears and the *jaṭāmukuṭa* hair arrangement, are also shared with later Kurkihār images



Figure 72. Balarāma. Kurkihār, Bihar, India. Year 9 of reign of Devapāla, ca. 821. Patna Museum, Patna.

(see for example the image of Avalokiteśvara, fig. 75, illustrated with cat. no. 144). Unfortunately the cold gilding on the face and blue paint in the hair have obscured the important details in these areas.

A detailed examination of this Mañjuśrī image reveals an important technical feature that seems not to have been previously documented. For some reason the artists either forgot or chose not to add the detailing to the medallion on the proper right armlet. It is therefore possible to see how the arm has been cast with simple raised elements and, by comparing it to the left armlet, to determine how the detailing has then been chased into the surface. This simple comparison shows just how central the chaser's hammer and tools were to the ultimate appearance of the image and how dependent on these finishing artists was the final aesthetic statement. The importance of using chased detail is characteristically Tibetan, but is less widely found in the Pāla idiom.

1. For discussion of this piece, see S. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, 42.

139

EKADAŚAMUKHA AVALOKITEŚVARA (TIB. SPYAN RAS GZIGS BCU GCIGS PA'I SHAL CAN; pronounced Chenrayzee chuchigpay shalchen)

Tibet, Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth century

Brass (Tib. *khro nag*) with inlaid silver and copper and inset stones

H: 4 5/8" W: 3" D: 2 1/8"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates Purchase (M.72.1.7)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

There are several layers of meaning of the eleven-headed (Skt. Ekadaśamukha) form of Avalokiteśvara. Perhaps the most widely known is the story that as a young Bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara made a vow that he would save all sentient beings from their perils. He became so overworked that he exploded into atom-sized pieces. His progenitor, Buddha Amitābha, felt sorry for him and reassembled his body, but provided him with eleven heads with which he could see the suffering of beings in all directions. Some versions of the same story also explain his thousand arms as resulting from the same explosion and reassembly. In other contexts, his heads represent the ten stages on the Bodhisattva path to enlightenment, with the eleventh head being that of a fully enlightened Buddha (always said to be the head of Amitābha). The most general meaning is that he is the epitome of compassion and that prayer to him will cure all ills and relieve one from all misfortune. Whatever the

iconological intentions of the makers, images such as this and many permutations of it are extremely popular in northern and East Asia from about the seventh century onward.

While there are several common facial arrangements,<sup>1</sup> this image conforms to none of them. The lowest tier has five heads, including one frontal main face and four smaller faces at the sides and back; the second tier has three heads; the third tier has two heads; and the fourth has a single head. Instead of the usual Buddha head at the top, the head is that of a Bodhisattva. While the textual tradition dealing with this particular convention is not known, it may be that the understanding of a Bodhisattva as a being who has foregone becoming a Buddha until sentient beings have been liberated led to the presentation of the final, eleventh stage as that of a fully enlightened Mahāsattva Bodhisattva rather than that of a Buddha.

On a stylistic basis, this piece has been attributed to Nepal,<sup>2</sup> to Nepal or eastern India,<sup>3</sup> and tentatively to Tibet.<sup>4</sup> Actually there can be no doubt that it is Tibetan for several reasons. The beading around the base is done in the "carved" Tibetan manner rather than the "balled" Indian manner; turquoise has been inset; and specifically Tibetan conventions were used for the gem atop the string of recitation beads, the lotus attribute, and the way the consecration materials were sealed inside the image.

PUBLISHED:

Henry Trubner, *The Art of Greater India: 3000 B. C.-1800 A. D.* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum, 1950), 84, no. 138; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 86, no. 93; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 288-289, pl. 72D; Pratapaditya Pal, "Cosmic Vision and Buddhist Images," *Art International* 25, no. 1-2 (1982), 18-19, fig. 11; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, vol. 2, 700-1800 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art with University of California Press, 1988), 182-183.

1. The usual arrangements of the heads are as follows: 1) main face, crown ringed with nine heads, single Buddha head on top; 2) three main faces, two tiers of three faces each, one Bodhisattva head, one Buddha head; 3) one main face, three tiers of three faces, and one Buddha face on top. The arrangement of faces in terms of angry or pacific can be extremely varied. The two most commonly encountered arrangements in the Himalayan traditions are: 1) three pacific main faces, two tiers of three pacific faces, one angry Bodhisattva face, and a pacific Buddha face on top; 2) three pacific main faces, two tiers of three angry faces, a single angry Bodhisattva face, and a pacific Buddha face on top. A few other arrangements are: 3) all faces pacific; 4) all angry; 5) one main face pacific, ten angry faces including the Buddha on top; 6) the main face pacific, nine angry faces, and the Buddha on top pacific. The point of all of this variation is that one must assume the existence of a separate purpose, meaning, and meditation for every combination.

2. Henry Trubner, *The Art of Greater India: 3000 B. C.-1800 A. D.* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum, 1950), 84.
3. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), 86, no. 93.
4. Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, vol. 2, 700-1800 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, 1988), 182-183.

140

"MAHĀKĀLA NĀGARĀJA" (?)

Tibet

Ca. eleventh or twelfth century (?)

Cast iron (Tib. *lcags*) with chased designs

H: 8 1/2" W: 4 1/2" D: 4"

Anonymous private collection

This figure presents a curious combination of two divergent iconographies. It seemingly combines elements of the iconography of Mahākāla with those of a serpent king (Skt. *nāgarāja*). The serpent hood behind his head suggests that the figure is an attendant of kLu mo rematī, a form of dPal ldan lha mo.<sup>1</sup> Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes dPal ldan lha mo as having an entourage of eight great black *nāgas* carrying choppers and snake-snares.<sup>2</sup> The figure in this image does not carry a snake-snare, but holds a *kapāla* (*human skull cup*), thus suggesting that he is a form of Mahākāla as well. Since such variations in secondary or attendant figures are fairly common, it is possible that the figure is still one of the *nāga* attendants and also Mahākāla at the same time. The figure may have been one of a set of eight such figures placed around a central figure of the female deity kLu mo rematī.

Another possibility is that the image is a visual interpretation of the *nāgarāja* Mahākāla, who occurs in the narrative of the Māravijaya in the *Nidāna-kathā*,<sup>3</sup> an introduction to the *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā* as found in Sri Lankan Pāli literature.<sup>4</sup> Briefly his story is as follows: At the time the Buddha-to-be approached the *bodhi* tree, the Buddha-to-be is attended by Indra (Śakra) who blows his trumpet heralding the event; Brahmā, who carries a white canopy shielding the Buddha-to-be from the sun; and the *nāgarāja* Mahākāla, who recites his praises. However, upon reaching the *bodhi* tree, all of the attending gods and spirit beings were forced to flee before the onslaught of Māra's army. "The Black One [Mahākāla], king of the Nāgas, dived into the earth, and went to Manjerika, the palace of the Nāgas . . . and lay down, covering his face with his hands."<sup>5</sup> The position of Mahākāla in the narrative is that of a loyal supporter who serves as a foil to eulogize the Buddha in one portion of the story and as a being who is terrified of Māra in the other. Even though Mahākāla is understood to have great powers, he exhibits terror by running away and hiding, thus indicating Māra's

powerfulness. Mahākāla's fear would hardly accord with the snarling face, bared fangs, and wide-eyed anger of this image. Accordingly, I am inclined to believe the correspondence to the name of the *nāgarāja* in the enlightenment narrative is mere coincidence and that the image is the attendant of kLu mo rematī.

The use of iron as a sculptural medium is highly unusual and probably is part of the iconology of such a figure since the iron itself reflects the magical properties with which the figure is imbued. Iron is the material par excellence of the *mgon khangs*, literally, "lord houses," the dark, secret places where the powers of the Dharmapālas can be summoned to the aid of sentient beings. Iron, preferably meteoric iron, by virtue of its strength, is understood as the only material capable of restraining or confining the forces of the many anthropomorphic reifications of evil and misfortune that occur in the Tibetan religious tradition.<sup>6</sup> Yet iron was expensive and difficult to work. Accordingly, the set of images from which this piece presumably comes must have been part of a very important group, probably made at a time of extreme crisis for the patron or intended to stand guard for a long time at a strategic location.

The figure is even more problematic stylistically than it is iconographically. One aspect of the process of stylistic analysis is governed by the axiom that the latest individual feature of a piece dictates the earliest possible date of the image. The problem here is that for the early Mahākāla type of image, there is no established chronology of elements. Therefore, what a generalist in Tibetan style might see as late features might be in fact the early appearance of those same features that then continued over decades or even centuries in the highly conservative traditions of wrathful deity iconography in Tibetan art. The tentative date suggested for this piece is based on the fact that the form of the figure is much closer to Pāla prototypes than most other Mahākāla-type images from Tibet. By the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, the Tibetan convention had exaggerated the short, corpulent, dwarflike figure, and had greatly accentuated the incipient tendencies seen in the Pāla treatment and Early Shar mthun sku conventions in Tibet.<sup>7</sup> When compared to eleventh- or twelfth-century Pāla period representations of Mahākāla (cat. nos. 26 and 27), the eleventh-century mGon po (Mahākāla) in the early Shar mthun bris painting of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 105), and the sixteenth-century Sa skya Bal bris painting of Pañjara Mahākāla (cat. no. 120), the iron image may be placed into its approximate chronological position. The style of the garland of heads and skull crown and the shape of the *dhoti* in the iron figure all suggest an early origin. In addition, the body of Mahākāla images of the later period tends to become much more squat and dwarfish. This feature is to the best of my judgment a pan-Tibetan



characteristic of Mahākāla imagery from the thirteenth century on. Therefore such features as the elongated flaming brows and the flaming mouth seen on this image, which one might take as normative "later" elements, should rather be seen as early occurrences of these conventions.

PUBLISHED:

Janice L. Dundon (now Leoshko), *A Problematic Cast Iron Sculpture from Tibet* (M. A. thesis, The Ohio State University, 1977).

1. See cat. no. 120 for an illustration of dPal ldan lha mo.
2. René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (S-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1956), 32.
3. T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Buddhist Birth Stories or Jātaka Tales* (London: Trübner and Co., 1880; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 97, where he is called "The Great Black One [i.e. Mahākāla], the king of the Nāgas [i.e., Nāgarāja]." My brackets.
4. I am not suggesting that the Tibetans had access to Pāli literature, but that the story in the *Nidāna-kathā* by the Sri Lankan translator of the *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā* related a story that also made its way to Tibet as well. So far as I am aware, this is the only version of the Buddha's enlightenment that contains the *nāgarāja* Mahākāla. However, other versions of the narrative do refer to a *nāga* at the same point, for example, a *nāgarāja* called Zhidi (Chih-ti; literally "Holding Earth" [Kṣitidhārin?]) occurs in the Chinese version of the *Abhiniskramana-sūtra*. See Samuel Beal, *The Romantic Legend of Śākya Buddha: A Translation of the Chinese Version of the Abhiniskramana-sūtra* (London: Trübner and Co., 1875; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), 222.
5. None of this coincides with the more usual lists and narratives of *nāgas*. The usual list of the eight *nāgas* (Tib. *klu brgyad*; Skt. *aṣṭanāga*) is:
  1. sTobs kyi rgyu (Skt. Karkaṭiko or Karkatikā)
  2. Dung skyong (Skt. Śaṅkhapāla)
  3. mTha' yas (Skt. Ananta)
  4. Nor rgyas (Skt. Vāsuki)
  5. 'Jog po (Skt. Takṣaka)
  6. Rigs ldan (Skt. Kulika)
  7. Pad ma (Skt. Padma)
  8. Pad ma chen po (Skt. Mahāpadma), or Chu lha (Skt. Varuṇa).
 From Ngor Thar rtse mKhan po, bSod nams rgya mtsho, *Tibetan Maṇḍalas: The Ngor Collection*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983), vol. 2, 338. Other *nāgas* who occur frequently in *maṇḍalas* are Nanda and Upananda.
6. See my "Iconography of Evil Deities in Tibet," *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture* 3 (1973): 55-75, for a study of a group of evil deities.
7. Heather Stoddard, "A Stone Sculpture of mGur mGon-po, Mahākāla of the Tent, Dated 1292," *Oriental Art*, n.s. 31, no. 3 (Autumn 1985): 278-282. While the beautiful image published by Stoddard is an obvious example of a fully developed type, there is ample evidence that neither Tibetan sculpture nor painting developed in a monolithic manner. Pockets of conservatism and pockets of innovation often existed in close proximity. Our knowledge of the development of style in Tibetan art is only beginning to evolve to the point where these variations may be understood.

141

MAHĀVAIROCANA (TIB. RNAM PAR SNANG MDZAD CHEN PO; pronounced Nampar nangzay chenpo) OF THE SARVATATHĀGATATATTVASAMGRAHA

Tibet, dBus District (?), Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth or thirteenth century

Gilt copper alloy with traces of blue pigment

H: 6 1/2" W: 3 1/8"

On loan from the Far Eastern Department, George Crofts Collection, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada (918.39.16)

Mahāvairocana (Tib. rNam par snang mdzad chen po) is a transcendental aspect of Śākyamuni, as indicated by the various insignia of royalty and supramundanity that he wears. Although separate images of Mahāvairocana from the Pāla region are rare, the iconography clearly was established in both Indic and early Second Propagation Buddhist art in Tibet.<sup>1</sup> Atīśa, one of the principal figures associated with the Second Propagation, taught the Vairocana meditations of *carya* and *yoga tantras*. Due to its early date, this piece probably reflects the teachings Atīśa brought with him from India to Tibet in the eleventh century. But until the details of Atīśa's teachings on Vairocana have been studied, it will remain virtually impossible to assess the iconography and historical context of this image. The full meaning of this iconography in the Indic context is unclear. In Tibetan Buddhism in general, Mahāvairocana is a *sambhogakāya*, or "mode of transcendent bliss" of the Buddha, but in other contexts, such as Japanese Tendai Buddhism, Mahāvairocana manifests the *dharmakāya*, or "being of Dharma," from which all *sambhogakāya* forms in turn emanate. As either the *dharmakāya* or *sambhogakāya*, Vairocana emanates the four other Buddhas of the *maṇḍala* and thereby all of the beings of their respective Buddha-families.

The hand gesture that Mahāvairocana displays is of great interest. In most Western language literature it would normally be called *dharmacakra mudrā* (i.e., the *dharmacakra pravartana mudrā*, or "symbolic gesture of turning the wheel of the Dharma"), symbolizing the teaching of the Dharma, but actually it is not a known version of the traditional *dharmacakra mudrā*. The usual gesture is made with the forefinger of the proper left hand pointing to a circle formed by the thumb and one other finger of the right hand.<sup>2</sup> In this image the fingers of the proper right hand enclose the fingers of the left hand. In some other versions, the forefinger is extended to some degree. This *mudrā* is known by several names, i.e., the *Mahāvairocana mudrā* (symbolic gesture of the Great Brilliant Radiance Buddha), *jñāna muṣṭi mudrā* (symbolic gesture fist of transcendent insight), *Tathāgatamuṣṭi mudrā* (symbolic-gesture fist of a Tathāgata), and *bodhyaṅgī*

*mudrā* (symbolic-gesture of [the] member of enlightenment). The names that it has received in Buddhist literature suggest that the *mudrā* does not signify a direct teaching but perhaps indicates the realization to be attained by means of the teaching.

The forms of the figure and his halo are deeply rooted in the Pāla period Magadhan schools and display particular similarity to images from Kurkihār. Many features of the image appear to be abbreviated notations of the Pāla conventions, as a comparison with a tenth-century Kurkihār image demonstrates (fig. 73). The relationship between the general shape and forms of the *prabhāvalī* are especially noteworthy. Thus, this image is conceptually very close to the Indic tradition, while it is remote from the classical tradition pursued by the gTsang Valley sculptors.



Figure 73. Buddha and two Bodhisattvas. Kurkihār, Bihar, India. Ca. tenth century. Patna Museum, Patna.

1. I know of only four Pāla images of Vairocana in which he appears as the central deity rather than as one in the group of five Jina Buddhas above the heads of many of the deities depicted on the steles (see cat. no. 33). The four individual images of Vairocana are all from Nālandā.
2. There is considerable variation in *dharmacakra mudrā* iconography, because various fingers of the left hand may point to the wheel, and various fingers of the right hand may form the wheel with the thumb.

142

AVALOKITEŚVARA (TIB. SPYAN RAS GZIGS; pronounced Chenrayzee)

Tibet, dBus District (?), Shar mthun sku

Ca. twelfth or thirteenth century

Gilt copper alloy with traces of blue pigment

H: 7 3/4" W: 3 1/8"

On loan from the Far Eastern Department, George Crofts Collection, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada (918.39.17)

Following the Kurkihār model as does the previous piece, many elements of this image, especially the base and the surrounding aura, are derived directly from the Kurkihār prototypes. Although they are not as finely detailed, even the rays of light (Skt. *prabhā*) radiating from the *prabhāvalī* are nearly identical to those seen on some Kurkihār examples (see fig. 74 illustrated with cat. no. 144). In particular, the details of the stepped, tripartite base are strongly related to the Kurkihār prototype.

The accentuated thrice-bent (Skt. *tribhaṅga*) posture of the figure suggests his probable role as an attendant figure. The Bodhisattvas that attend a Buddha are often strongly angled in a bilaterally symmetrical manner, suggesting that this Avalokiteśvara figure once may have been part of an attendant pair.

This image and the previous image of Mahāvairocana offer a glimpse of a little-known and distinctive subschool of the Shar mthun sku tradition of Tibetan metalworking.

143

AVALOKITEŚVARA (TIB. SPYAN RAS GZIGS; pronounced Chenrayzee)

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku

Ca. fourteenth century

Brass (untested) with cold gilding and traces of polychrome

H: 12 3/4" W: 6" D: 2 3/4"

The Zimmerman Family Collection

One aspect of what I have designated as Transitional Shar mThun sku is easily distinguished in this image by the predominantly Pāla figure type ornamented with stylistically mixed jewelry, garments, and crown. The specific proportions and stance of the figure closely conform to Pāla conventions. However, the smooth, flowing anatomy with its slightly fleshy appearance evidences Nepali influence, and many of the jewelry details characterize the Tibetan synthesis of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that took place in the gTsang District. Thus, various streams of influence have converged in a Tibetan synthesis that came to mark the art of the gTsang

workshops for nearly three centuries. Specific products of the Tibetan synthesis are the treatment of the lotus, the details of the crown, and the manner of representing the gem emerging from the top of the *jaṭāmukūṭa*.

The fully polychromed face was probably a later offering to the image. Typically, a patron might offer to have the faces of all the images in a monastery painted, and it is not unusual to find an image with two or more layers of polychromy on the face.

PUBLISHED:

Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l'Himālaya: Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 143, 144, no. 128; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 180-181, pl. 34e.



Figure 74. Khasarpaṇa Avalokiteśvara. Kurkihār, Bihar, India. Ca. late tenth or early eleventh century. Patna Museum, Patna.



Figure 75. Avalokiteśvara. Kurkihār, Bihar, India. Ca. twelfth century. Patna Museum, Patna.

144

MAITREYA (TIB. BYAMS PA; pronounced Jampa)

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku  
Ca. thirteenth century

Figure of silver with copper inlays, inset turquoise, cold gilding, and blue pigments; base of gilt copper alloy  
H: 12 3/4" W: 3 3/8" D: 2 1/4"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Severance and Greta Milliken Purchase Fund (82.48)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

Maitreya (Tib. Byams pa) may be recognized by his characteristic attributes. The *kuṇḍikā*, or mouth-rinsing bottle, is shown emerging from the lotus blossom above his proper left shoulder, and out of the same lotus stalk grow *nāgakesara* flowers.<sup>1</sup>

This image of Maitreya has not been recognized previously as Tibetan, but there are several characteristics that definitively demonstrate its place of origin. However, as a fundamental basis for comparison, it is first necessary to establish the primary source from which the style was derived. The anatomy of the figure and most of the



principal elements of the detailing of the jewelry, hair arrangement, and basic configuration of the attributes are rooted in the Pāla school at Kurkihār of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This is easily demonstratable by comparison to two images from Kurkihār: a late tenth- or eleventh-century representation of standing Khasarpaṇa Avalokiteśvara (fig. 74) and a twelfth-century, gilded image of a seated Avalokiteśvara (fig. 75).

With their thick straight legs, slight *tribhaṅga* postures, *gomukha* (cow-faced) torsos, and smooth shoulders and arms, the Kurkihār Khasarpaṇa and the Tibetan Maitreya share the same basic iconometric convention. Although the Tibetan piece is much more elaborately detailed, an item-by-item comparison of the jewelry worn by Maitreya to that of the seated figure demonstrates that they have been portrayed wearing virtually identical sets of ornaments. Some features such as the double plain bangles on the proper left wrist of the Maitreya have not been altered since the eleventh century. Other elements, such as the girdle at the waist and the pendants that hang from it, show a progression of increasing elaboration from the eleventh-century Khasarpaṇa through the seated Avalokiteśvara to the Maitreya.

Close to the Kurkihār convention though it may be, many characteristics of the Maitreya are demonstrably Tibetan. For example, in contrast to the precision of the Kurkihār version, the jewelry on the Maitreya is summarily rendered in a sketchy manner. The inseting of stones, especially turquoise, is much more commonly encountered in Tibet than in India.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most important features for determining the Tibetan origin of the piece is the treatment of the back (fig. 76). Originally modeled in the wax in an extremely cursory manner, the back of the image has virtually been left unfinished with the exception of some minor chasing to the hair and lower garment. It is clear from the position of the lug between the shoulders of the figure that a *prabhāvalī* was attached closely to the back of the piece, and the image also probably stood in a base<sup>3</sup> that may have had a larger secondary *prabhāvalī* surrounding the whole figure, in which case the back of the figure would have been impossible to see. Whereas Indic images are almost always finished in the back, even in contexts where the work cannot be seen without deliberate examination, it is characteristic of the practical Tibetan craftsman to leave unfinished or to treat in the greatly simplified manner the parts that will not be seen. Similarly, the back of the lotus base is not gilded, apparently in an effort to save amalgam by not gilding an area that would not be seen. While this feature may be unique to this piece, it provides further evidence of Tibetan economy and pragmatism when dealing with unseen surfaces.

Tibetan metal images of the Transitional Shar mthun sku style exhibit two comparative characteristics that



Figure 76. Back of cat. no. 144.

greatly aid the identification of the style. The first is a continuation of the ongoing process of elaboration, while the second is a sculptural boldness that characterizes the later pieces in the gTsang Valley style. The quality of elaboration may easily be seen in a detailed comparison of the treatment of the jewelry on the Kurkihār standing Khasarpaṇa Avalokiteśvara and on the Maitreya. On this Maitreya image all the jewelry is larger and more ornate, and sashes and ribbons have been added as overlays at the waist and around the thighs. The school's development in terms of elaboration continued in Tibet in a linear manner, and images such as the Maitreya fit perfectly into a chronological developmental spectrum. Sculptural boldness is a somewhat more subtle but nonetheless distinctive trait. While the hand, or "touch," of the wax-molder is still highly skilled, it shapes the forms in a stronger, bolder, and more emphatic way. There is less detailing, and where there is fine detailing it is somewhat less precise than the Indic prototypes. Moreover, the finisher of the image chases and chisels with a looser, more spontaneous approach. With this and the following group of Transitional Shar mthun sku images, we can examine in detail both the traditionalism and the creativity of the new masters of the Pāla-based style.



PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *The Sensuous Immortals: A Selection of Sculptures from the Pan-Asian Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, [1978]), 99, no. 59; Gouriswar Bhattacharya, "Stūpa as Maitreya's Emblem," *The Stūpa: Its Religious, Historical and Architectural Significance*, ed. Anna Libera Dallapiccola in collaboration with Stephanie Zingel-avé Lallemand, Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, Südasiens Institut, Universität Heidelberg 55 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980), 100-111 (107); Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, Ltd., 1981), 286-287, pl. 71F.

1. Also known as the *nāgapuṣpa*, that is, the *Michelia champaka*, the *bodhi* tree (Skt. *bodhivṛkṣa*) of Maitreya.
2. Although a few Indian examples do bear stones, the vast majority do not and this feature is not characteristic of the Pāla idiom as is presently known. Significantly, the Pāla revival school under the Qing dynasty in China (see cat. nos. 161 and 162), whose imperial workshops could and often did make lavish use of semiprecious stones, completely omitted the gem ornamentation and even the dams from their Kurkihar-style recreations.
3. As suggested by the flat rim beneath the lotus pedestal.

145

#### BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA)

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku  
Ca. thirteenth century  
Brass with silver and copper inlays and copper  
baseplate (untested)  
H: 10 1/2" W: 8 1/8" D: 5"  
Doris Wiener Gallery

Iconographically identical to many images of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in *bhūmiśparśa mudrā* seated on the Vajrāsana, the adamantine seat of enlightenment, this image also exhibits a close similarity to Pāla images. Details such as the double hem of the robe and the treatment of the flesh at the waist are clearly related to these features of a tenth-century crowned Buddha from the Pāla region (cat. no. 15). The billowing fold of the drapery over the proper left arm is also a common feature of Pāla metal images. The shape of the eyes and incised eyebrows and lips are all shared with southern Magadhan images, especially examples from Kurkihar. At the same time, the narrowed elongation of the waist, the treatment of the hair as small lumps representing curls, and the exaggerated earlobes all demonstrate the Tibetan origin of the image. Ultimately the narrowed and elongated waist can probably be traced to the Kashmiri artisans who were responsible for introducing the brass alloy technique into the Tibetan heartland.

Technically, the brassy metal of the image and the

relatively poor casting are typical of larger Tibetan images of the period. Apparently the casting did not fill the mold in several places on the back. This was probably due either to leaving too thin a layer of wax on the core, so that there wasn't enough space for the molten metal to flow into the area, or to not having the mold hot enough for the metal to flow easily into narrow areas. In both cases the result would be the same—an imperfect casting. The holes were filled with brassy metal hammered into place. The drapery across the back between the left arm and the torso is also formed by a thin sheet of brass hammered into place.

Originally the image must have sat on a lotus base, a throne, or some other type of pedestal, since there are projecting pins at both knees and in the center of the back that would have been used to attach the piece to some form of support.

146

#### SITA MAÑJUGHOṢA (TIB. 'JAM DBYANGS DĀKAR PO KHA CHE PAṆ CHEN LUGS; pronounced Jamyang karpo karchay punchenluk) ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE KASHMIRI PAṆḌITA ŚĀKYA ŚRĪ

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku  
Ca. late thirteenth or fourteenth century  
Brass with silver inlays (untested), inset turquoise, and  
chased detailing  
H: 9" W: 6 3/8" D: 5 7/8"  
Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection  
(70.62)

Sita Mañjughoṣa (White Mañjughoṣa) is a variety of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and is therefore a personification of transcendental wisdom. In most images Mañjughoṣa carries the sword of transcendent wisdom (Skt. *prajñākhaḍga*) in his right hand. However, the figure carries only a book (Skt. *pustaka*) atop his blue lotus flower. Since the form taught by Śākyā Śrī (1127-1225, active in Tibet 1204-1213) carries only the book, it may be inferred that this image conforms to the teachings of Śākyā Śrī.<sup>1</sup> Sita Mañjughoṣa as taught by Śākyā Śrī personifies the attainment of transcendental wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*) through Buddhist meditation practice and the application of that wisdom to the well-being and enlightenment of the practitioner.

A masterpiece of the wax modeler's art, the smooth surface, subtle modeling of the facial features, and gently undulating anatomy contrast sharply with the crisply defined jewelry and accessories. The crown is so sharply defined that it gives the illusion of being a separate element resting gently on the head of the Bodhisattva head rather than cast as part of it. What is perhaps most remarkable is

that the best gTsang District workshops maintained this level of quality for about three hundred years, from the mid- or late thirteenth century well into the sixteenth century.

The bodily proportions, garment, and lotus base follow the Pāla stylistic idioms closely, while the jewelry, attributes, and some details of the garment have been given a Tibetan interpretation.

#### PUBLISHED:

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Oriental Art* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 41, fig. 18.

1. For a manuscript once in the possession of Śākya Śrī, see cat. no. 58. For the source of the iconographic identification, see Lokesh Chandra, *Buddhist Iconography*, 2 vols. (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1987), 266, no. 694.

147

SITA MAÑJUGHOṢA (TIB. JAM DBYANGS DKAR PO KHA CHE PAṆ CHEN LUGS; pronounced Jamyang karmo punchenluk) ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE KASHMIRI PANDITA ŚĀKYA ŚRĪ

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku  
Ca. fourteenth century

Brass with silver and copper inlays (untested), inset turquoise, and chased detailing

H: 12 3/8" W: 8 1/2" D: 5 3/4"

The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection (1979.46)

Iconographically identical to the slightly earlier Transitional Shar mthun sku image of Sita Mañjuḥoṣa (see cat. no. 146 for discussion) and nearly the same size, the two pieces provide an unparalleled opportunity for comparative stylistic analysis. By carefully examining the variations and similarities, one can easily trace the stylistic changes that took place in one of the major schools of metal sculpture.

As in the case of the earlier Mañjuḥoṣa (cat. no. 146), nondiscretionary features such as the anatomical convention, the basic facial features, and the configuration of the lotus base are still distinctly Pāla-dependent. However, discretionary elements such as the lotus stalks, jewelry, and rendition of the attributes have evolved into even more elaborate configurations. More gems have been added (although this simply may be a function of an increased level of patronage), and the chased lines, details of the attributes, and three-dimensionality of the lotus petals have either been extended or elaborated. Anatomically the face and body are slightly less subtly modeled, but still highly refined, and the torso has been

slightly elongated. While these variations are slight, they clearly demonstrate the development of the gTsang school of metal casting in a direction that remained extremely conservative in format but displayed an increasing tendency toward elaboration of ornamental detail.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the tendency toward increased elaboration seems to come from the brass-founding center(s) in Gu ge, where highly complex ornamental styles developed in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. Although the form of contact between the Gu ge craftsmen and the gTsang artisans is not known, both regions are in the gTsang Valley, and given that extensive trading missions and travel by monks were commonplace, it is to be expected that the centers had some form of contact throughout the period.

#### PUBLISHED:

The Asia Society, compiler, *Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection* (New York: The Asia Society, [1981]), 24; John C. Huntington, "Three Essays on Himalayan Metal Images," *Apollo*, n.s. 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983), 416-418, pl. 5; Donald S. Lopez, Jr., and Steven C. Rockefeller, *Images of the Christ and the Bodhisattva* (Middlebury, Vermont: The Christian A. Johnson Memorial Gallery of Middlebury College, 1984), no. 38.

1. Some features, such as the jewelled belt of the earlier Mañjuḥoṣa versus the tied sash of this piece, are in the discretionary range and, because they are essentially interchangeable, do not constitute a significant variation.

148

ṢAḌAKṢARĪ AVALOKITEŚVARA (TIB. SPYAN RAS GZIGS YI GE DRUG PA JO LUGS; pronounced Chenrayzee yigay drugpajoluk)

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku  
Ca. fourteenth century

Brass with silver and copper inlays (untested)

H: 5 1/8"

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. Richard Benedek (1982.457)

For a discussion of the iconography of Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs yi ge drug pa jo lugs), see cat. no. 110.

This small image was probably produced by the same regional schools that produced the two previous examples. Less detailed, presumably because of its size, it still retains much of the enrichment and elaboration that characterize the Transitional Shar mthun bris style. The jewelry is particularly sharply defined and, while geometric and abstracted, conveys the richness of elaboration that is

the hallmark of the tradition.

Characteristic of Tibetan workmanship, the back of the image is only rudely sculpted, lacking virtually all detailing and having been given no finishing whatsoever. Indeed, the back of the headdress is entirely unsculpted and consists of nothing more than tool marks in the wax where it was pressed into a flat surface. Although the image is not sealed in the usual Tibetan manner, there is a scroll of paper pushed into the interior of the torso from below, which is almost certain to have the OM MANĪ PADME HUM, the *mantra* of Avalokiteśvara, printed on it hundreds or even thousands of times. On the back of the image are a bracket and a tenon, or lug, that once supported the *prabhāvalī*, or aura, of the figure.

PUBLISHED:

Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 282-283, pl. 69F.

149

VAJRAPĀṆI (TIB. RDO RJE PHYAG NA; pronounced Dorjay chagna)

Tibet, Transitional Shar mthun sku

Ca. thirteenth century

Copper alloy (untested)

H: 6 1/2" W: 5" D: 3"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

As expected in Transitional Shar mthun sku, the anatomy of the figure is clearly based on the Pāla tradition and in particular on the many metaphors that guide mature Pāla anatomical depiction, such as that the shape of the torso should resemble a cow's face (Skt. *gomukha*). Numerous Indian artistic texts were translated into Tibetan, and it is certain that they were available to and used by Tibetan artists, which would help to account for this close correspondence of the anatomical features to the Pāla idiom.

Although similarly embedded in the Pāla tradition, the stylistic enrichments and enhancements on this image of the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi (Tib. rDo rje phyag na) represents an idiom entirely different from that of the previous three pieces. The base detailing with the two grooves, the secondary petal tip behind the lotus petals, the absence of drapery and flowing sashes at the waist and around the lower body, the distinctive crown and billowing ribbons, and the distinctive jewelry all mark the image as the product of an equally highly skilled but entirely distinct workshop. The faces also represents a distinct convention. It lacks the detailed inlays of silver and has modeled,

elevated brow ridges rather than the incised lines that typify the style of the gTsang workshops. Another identifying mark of the workshop may be the unique treatment of the lotus blossom (?) at the proper left shoulder of the figures. Seen from the front, it appears almost as if the lotus had tipped to the back showing its underside where the pod joins the stalk.

Undoubtedly the product of a different workshop than the gTsang figures, this piece does not conform to any regional convention that has yet been identified. The metal is different from that of most known images and thus does not suggest a provenance. The image may be a product of the dBus District, but that remains a tentative attribution. Whatever its place of origin, the piece represents the "golden age" of Tibetan metal sculpture.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Indo-Asian Art From The John Gilmore Ford Collection* (Baltimore, Maryland: Walters Art Gallery, 1971), 48, no. 65.

150

MAHĀŚRĪ TĀRĀ (TIB. SGROL MA DPAL CHEN; pronounced Drolma pelchen) AS AṢṬAMAHĀBHAYA TĀRĀ

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku

Ca. thirteenth century

Brass (Tib. *li dkar*), untested, with cold gilding, blue pigment, and chased detailing

H: 4 1/4" W: 2 5/8" D: 2"

Loan from Dr. Ralph C. Marcove through the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (12.1987)

Mahāśrī Tārā (Tib. sGrol ma dpal chen) is one of the most rarely encountered deities in all of Tibetan Buddhism. Her images are identifiable by her *mudrā* and by the presence of two flowers she holds. The one she holds in her left hand is a *nīlapadma*, or blue lotus, and the one she holds in her right hand is the *puṇḍarīka*, or white, lotus.<sup>1</sup> More importantly, her hands display *vyākhyāna mudrā*, literally, gesture of explaining (the Dharma). The *vyākhyāna mudrā* is also characteristic of Prajñāpāramitā, the deity who personifies the Prajñāpāramitā texts and wisdom, but Prajñāpāramitā would carry a book atop the left or both lotuses she holds. This seems to be the only form of Tārā that makes this gesture. The *mantra* of the deity, OM TĀRE ṬUTTĀRA ṬURE DHANAM DADE SVĀHĀ, suggests that she is a bestower of wealth and that meditation practice centered on her may have been performed to secure prosperity and well-being.

In the vine scroll just under the petals of the lotus

throne around the back of the base of the image are four minutely rendered figures representing four of the eight perils of the *aṣṭamahābhaya* cycle.<sup>2</sup> Since these are characteristic of *Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā*, they identify the sculpture as a dual image, combining *Mahāśrī Tārā* and *Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā*. So small that they barely can be detected by the unaided eye, they are an archer (representing the peril of thieves), a pair of elephants (representing the peril of death by being trampled by elephants), three creatures resembling lions (illustrating the peril of being devoured by lions), and a standing male figure holding an unidentified object (possibly representing the peril of disease). The inhabited vine scroll depicting the perils precisely foreshadows one of the stylistic developments found in its fully developed form in the fourteenth-century *Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā* (cat. no. 155).

Perhaps more important than the unusual iconography of the figure is the clarity with which it follows the Indian prototype, as represented by what may be the sole image of *Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā* found in India.<sup>3</sup> Many features of this brass image are decidedly Tibetan, such as the details of the crown ornamentation and methods of chiseling the details of the jewelry, as well as the *li dkar* metal itself. However, the overall appearance and even many significant details of the figure and its attributes are precise copies of the Indian prototype. Notable are the replication of the unusual convention for the blue lotus, with its full body and narrow rounded petals; the raised central portion of the petals of the lotus seat; and the distinctive double-line convention for the raised folds in the drapery of the lower garment. The inhabited vine scroll on the back of the brass image occurs on the front below the lotus in the Indic prototype. This example of detailed iconometric and stylistic continuity combined with its subtle and fully integrated modifications demonstrates how thoroughly the Tibetan craftsmen had mastered the Shar mthun sku tradition.

PUBLISHED:

Sotheby's, compiler, *Indian, Tibetan, Nepalese, Thai, Khmer and Javanese Art including Indian Miniatures*, Catalogue for auction held on September 20 and 21, 1985 (New York: Sotheby's, 1985), lot 91.

1. Mallar Ghosh, *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India: A Study of Tārā, Prajñās of Five Tathāgatas and Bhrikuti* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1980), 57-59. See also Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography: Mainly Based on the Sādhnamālā and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Rituals*, reprint with corrections (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968), 227-229.
2. For detailed discussions of the iconography of *Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā*, see cat. no. 108.
3. Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, fig. 169.

151

PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ (TIB. SER PHYIN MA;  
pronounced Serchinma) OR MAHĀŚRĪ TĀRĀ (?)

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku  
Ca. thirteenth or early fourteenth century  
Brass with silver and copper inlays (untested) and inset  
semiprecious stones

H: 3 1/4" W: 2 3/16" D: 1 3/4"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

This deity displays the *vyākhyāna mudrā* that is characteristic of both *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Mahāśrī Tārā*. However, because the lotus above the proper left shoulder has been damaged, it cannot be determined whether she held a book (Skt. *pustaka*) atop the lotus, which would confirm her identity as *Prajñāpāramitā*. The figure wears the trilobate *merumukuṭa* headdress of the yogin rather than the "royal princess" hair style seen on most early forms of *Tārā*. Because the *merumukuṭa* headdress is far more commonly worn by *Prajñāpāramitā* than by *Tārā* (compare to the Pāla depiction of *Prajñāpāramitā*, cat. no. 8), the image is probably *Prajñāpāramitā*.<sup>1</sup>

While the Pāla idiom is still obviously the determining stylistic source for the anatomy and most of the details of the image, many minor modifications of the Pāla model have occurred. A Tibetan element is present in the beading around the base, with the indentation in the upper center of each bead and the beads rendered in the "carved" Tibetan manner rather than the "individually balled" Indian manner. The flow of jewelry between the legs of the figure, the details of the lotus attribute, and the proportions of the *merumukuṭa* all show Tibetan modifications of the basic Pāla visual vocabulary.

PUBLISHED:

Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya: Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 69, 71, no. 9; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 282-283, pl. 69E.

1. However, an identification as *Mahāśrī Tārā* cannot entirely be ruled out because the *merumukuṭa* is at times, albeit rarely, worn by *Tārā*. Technically *Mahāśrī Tārā* is the consort of the Jina Buddha Amoghasiddhi, and thereby in one sense is an emanation of *Prajñāpāramitā*, rendering them identical in nature and communicative content.



ŚYĀMA TĀRĀ (TIB. SGROL LJANG MA; pronounced Droljangma [ALSO KNOWN AS AṢṬAMAHĀBHAYA TĀRĀ AND KHADIRAVANĪ TĀRĀ])

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku  
Ca. terminal thirteenth or fourteenth century  
Brass (Tib. *li dkar*) with silver inlays (untested), inset turquoise, and chased and hammered detailing  
H: 6 3/8" W: 4 5/6" D: 2 1/2"

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates Purchase (M.69.13.3)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

In an image as small as this, it is usual for the central figure of an iconographic scheme to be shown alone, without secondary figures and elements. Accordingly, while the more general name of Śyāma Tārā (Tib. sGrol ljang ma) is an obvious identification, the question of whether the figure is also intended to be either Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā or Khadiravaṇī Tārā must remain open to question since additional identifying figures are not included.<sup>1</sup>

Although previously unrecognized as Tibetan, many features of the piece amply demonstrate its Tibetan origins. These include the distinctive color of the metal,<sup>2</sup> the Tibetan method of closure of the base (in this case sealed with pitch imbedded with barleycorns), the characteristically unfinished modeling of the back of the attributes, and the uniquely Tibetan version of the hair and ornament atop the head.<sup>3</sup> While the anatomy of the figure follows the Pāla iconometric and basic stylistic dictates in detail, many elements of the image have departed from a strict adherence to the more refined Pāla approach and have been given a more energetic treatment. The vigorous, almost rough, modeling of the facial features and ornaments is also untypical of known Pāla images. Ultimately, the bold modeling of the wax is the primary distinctive characteristic of this school and suggests a significant departure from the early Shar mthun sku tradition.

#### PUBLISHED:

J. L. Trabold, *The Art of India: An Historical Profile. Selections from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (Northridge, Calif.: Fine Arts Gallery, California State University, Northridge, 1975), 23-24, no. 23; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2, 700-1800. *A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, in association with the University of California Press, 1988), 208-209, no. 104.

1. The clarification of this issue is likely to be contained within the interior of the image. Like most Tibetan metal images the bottom of this image has

been sealed with a copper base plate. The base plate bears a chased design of a double *vajra* (Skt. *viśvavajra*), a symbol of permanence and thus, among other things, an expression of the intention that the image should never be opened once it has been sealed. Thus in spite of the information the contents of the image might provide, opening the image constitutes a religious desecration. Dedictory materials and *mantras* are normally placed inside the image before the base plate is put in place. At least one of these items would carry the proper name of the deity.

2. As noted several times previously, no archaeologically documented images from any part of eastern India or Bangladesh are cast in this color of brass.
3. The form of the ornament atop the head is unknown in Pāla examples.

#### 153

HEVAJRA (TIB. KYE RDO RJE; pronounced Kyay dorjay)

Tibet, gTsang District, Transitional Shar mthun sku  
Ca. fourteenth century  
Brass with silver inlay (untested), orange pigment in hair

H: 6 3/4" W: 4 1/4" D: 3 1/2"

Doris Wiener Gallery

For the iconography of Hevajra see cat. no. 118, and for a detailed iconography of a similar type of *yab yum* couple see the iconography of Cakrasaṃvara in Appendix II.

While there is a socket in the base of the image where it could be mounted on a shaft, presumably of a lotus stalk, and a small square hole behind the figures that undoubtedly held a *prabhāvalī*, it is unclear just how this image might have been used. It might have been an isolated sculpture or may have been part of a set.<sup>1</sup> An image of the central deity, or the male-female pair of deities, of a *maṇḍala* can represent the whole *maṇḍala*, which is called the "sole hero" (Skt. *ekavīra*; Tib. *dpa' bo gcig*) version of the *maṇḍala*. A sole sculpture like this could also serve as the centerpiece of various kinds of constructed *maṇḍalas*, such as a powder *maṇḍala*. Powder *maṇḍalas* are drawn in chalk or charcoal and then colored with finely ground minerals painstakingly applied to the surface in tiny amounts by shaking a small tube, sometimes creating astonishingly elaborate designs. These delicate compositions are in part intended to demonstrate the ephemeral nature of all phenomena, including the *maṇḍala* being depicted. At the end of a series of rituals, these *maṇḍalas*—no matter how intricate or magnificent—are simply dumped into the river. Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain just how such an image, now removed from its original context, was used, or if it simply languished as part of some temple's store of images. However, this image is more completely finished at the back than is usual for most Tibetan sculptures of this time, indicating that it was intended to be seen from all sides, as would be demanded by its placement in a *maṇḍala*.

The rarity of surviving images of the Heruka class of deities in India and Bangladesh prevents a close comparison between this figure and any one Indic prototype. In view

of the pattern of close adherence to Indic prototypes by the masters of the gTsang District Shar mthun sku tradition, it must be assumed not only that there were Indic forerunners, but that the image follows them as closely as the silver Maitreya in the exhibition (cat. no 114) follows its Kurkihār models. Indeed, since the Shar mthun sku school follows the Kurkihār forerunners so closely, it is a reasonable assumption that this image approximates a Kurkihār version of the same subject.

Two Pāla examples may serve as comparisons. One is a metal image of Saṃvara that was found at Pātharghātā, in Bhagalpur District, Bihar (fig. 77), and the other is a



Figure 77. Saṃvara. Pātharghātā, Bhagalpur District, Bihar, India. Ca. eleventh century. Indian Museum, Calcutta.

miniature stone image of Hevajra that was found at Pāhārpur in northern Bengal (fig. 78). Stylistically the Tibetan figure seems to have had an Indian source that fell somewhere between the two images, in terms of detailing and elaboration. For structural reasons the Pāhārpur stone image would not be expected to have the longer, thinner arms and acute bends at the elbows that the two metal images have, so it cannot be used for comparison in that respect. However, the jewelry and headdress elaboration of the Pāhārpur figure are closely related to the Tibetan image of Hevajra. The Pāhārpur image also demonstrates several anatomical conventions of the female consort of the Heruka, with the fully rounded buttocks and acutely thrown-back head. The image of Saṃvara

from Pātharghātā, while depicted as a single figure without a visible consort (although the consort is nonetheless implicit in the image), exhibits the body posture and the relative thinness and angularity of the arm position found in the Tibetan Hevajra.



Figure 78. Hevajra. Pāhārpur, Rajshahi District, Bangladesh. Ca. twelfth century. Indian Museum, Calcutta.

In light of the importance of Hevajra in Sa skya meditation practice and ritual, it is probable that this image was made for the Sa skya sect.

1. For instance, a set of five identical images could have been used to make a three-dimensional version of the Pañcakula Hevajradāka *maṇḍala* seen in cat. no. 118. Presumably a single base with five stalks, one central and four to the sides, in sweeping "lazy S" curves, would have served as the support for such a *maṇḍala*.

SIMHANĀDA AVALOKITEŚVARA (?) (TIB. SPYAN  
RAS GZIGS DBANG PHYUG SENG GE SGRA;  
pronounced Chenrayzee wongchuk sengaydra)

Tibet, Late Shar mthun sku

Ca. late thirteenth or fourteenth century

Copper alloy with gold and silver inlay and chased  
detailing

H: 6 3/4" W: 5 1/4" D: 4 7/8"

Collection of The Newark Museum, Purchase 1979, The  
Members' Fund (79.442)

A Bodhisattva with two lotuses at the shoulders can potentially be any one of several Bodhisattvas or even perhaps a generic Bodhisattva meant to attend a Buddha. However, this image probably represents Simhanāda Avalokiteśvara, as suggested by the meditation band around the proper left leg in combination with the variant of *dharmacakra mudrā*. The name Simhanāda is a direct reference to the teachings of the Buddha, the Buddha being the lion or *simha* and *nāda* referring to its roar, or his teachings.

This image is a masterpiece of the metal-founder's art as practiced in Tibet. The details of the face, forehead curls, and flowing straight locks of hair are all finely wrought. The lotus base, the robe worn by the figure, and the details of metalworking with its meticulously detailed inlay are all strictly Tibetan in character. The inlay work on the lower garment and the meditation band are refined and perfected to the limits of human vision. In addition, the surface of the figure has been burnished to an almost polished state. In refinement and detailing the image is comparable to the finest examples of Tibetan painting (cat. no. 113).

#### PUBLISHED:

Valrae Reynolds, Amy Heller, and Janet Gyatso,  
*Catalog of the Newark Museum Tibetan Collection*, part  
3, *Sculpture and Painting*, 2nd ed. (Newark, New Jersey:  
The Newark Museum, 1986), 74-75

ŚYĀMA TĀRĀ (TIB. SGROL LJANG MA; pronounced  
Droljangma [ALSO KNOWN AS AṢṬAMAHĀBHAYA  
TĀRĀ AND KHADIRAVANĪ TĀRĀ])

Tibet, Late Shar mthun sku

Ca. fourteenth century

Silver with parcel gilding; gold, silver, and copper  
inlays; copper alloys; fire gilding (all untested); chased  
and chiseled detailing; and originally with stone insets

H: 8 3/4" W: 6" D: 4"

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Williams Fund  
(84.74)

Illustrated in color

Astonishingly elaborate in ornamentation, this image of Tārā displays the very pinnacle of Tibetan craftsmanship and artistry. The anatomical forms of the main figure of Tārā are directly descended from the Pāla idiom, but layer upon layer of elaboration and enrichment have been added in a manner unknown in Indic metal images. The large lotus throne under Tārā is actually made up of three different types of lotus petals.<sup>1</sup> The uppermost set of petals is closely related to the Early Shar mthun sku type and is elaborated with a copper inset in the center and a thin line of gold around the edges of the petals. The petal-type of the middle layer is trefoil with a single subpetal in the center. This type seems to have been developed in China or in Khams and brought to central Tibet in the fourteenth century. These petals are also ornamented with a copper inlay in the center of the subpetal and with a gold outline of the trefoil part of the petal. Below that is a layer of gilded petals that is actually part of the major casting for the base; an unidentified substance may be seen filling the joint between the silver image and the pedestal. Seen as a whole, the combination of the three kinds of petals lends a visual complexity unparalleled in either India or China.

Other elaborations of the piece include the use of parcel gilding for the crown and some of Tārā's jewelry; the precise and astonishingly detailed metal inlays and chasing of the garments, jewelry, and lotus attributes; and the openwork lotus base. The use of "luxury" metals, which was known in India and certainly transmitted as a concept to Tibet,<sup>2</sup> was modified and enhanced by the Chinese techniques of combining gold and silver in parcel gilding. However, it was the Tibetans who fully explored the possibilities of elaboration presented by these materials and techniques.

It is likely that the central figure represents Śyāma Tārā, as suggested by the subtle distinction between the petals of the two lotus blossoms above her shoulders. The one over the proper left shoulder has slightly more elongated petals than the one over the right shoulder, and is therefore probably a *nīlapadma* (blue lotus) while the other is a *puṇḍarīka* (white lotus). The blue lotus, when present with Tārā making the *varada mudrā*, identifies the deity as Śyāma Tārā,<sup>3</sup> who is a manifestation of the Buddha's virtuous actions (Tib. *phrin las*; Skt. *karma*). This is also made clear by the setting in which Tārā is seated, for she is attended by two male Bodhisattvas, apparently Avalokiteśvara to the proper left and Maitreya to the proper right. These two Bodhisattvas are quintessentially connected with the Buddha's victory over Māra, and by their presence Tārā is equated with the Buddha Śākyamuni as an enlightened being. The lotus supports of the three

principal figures are themselves born aloft by an exuberantly convoluted vine with accurately rendered rhizomes, nodes, stalks, and lotus buds. In the front center of the base is another image of a female deity whose iconography is unidentified. Her context suggests that she is probably an emanation that Śyāma Tārā sends forth to protect and rescue the faithful.<sup>4</sup>

The great lotus in the center rises out of a lake that is encircled by another realistically rendered lotus vine consisting of rhizomes and nodes. Around the base is a complex vine scroll of lotus roots and stalks adorned by auspicious symbols and objects.<sup>5</sup> At the sides of the base two *nāga* kings emerge and offer their treasures (always the wish-granting gem, or *cintāmaṇi*) to Tārā. The theme of the *nāga* kings offering their sequestered treasures (implicitly enlightenment) to the Buddha is of great antiquity in Buddhist iconography and may be found as early as the late third century in Gandhāran sculpture. Their presence is another reiteration of the theme of Tārā as a fully enlightened being, or Buddha.

#### PUBLISHED:

Marylin M. Rhie and Robert A. F. Thurman, *From the Land of Snows: Buddhist Art of Tibet*, Catalogue of an exhibition at the Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Oct. 3-Nov. 15, 1984 [Amherst, Mass.: Amherst College, 1984], 15, no. 73; Joseph M. Dye, III, "The Arts of India, Nepal and Tibet," *Apollo* 122, no. 286 (Dec. 1985), 478, pl. 17; *Archives of Asian Art* 39 (1986), 86, fig. 42; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 41, fig. 19.

1. It is possible that the three tiers have iconographic significance.
2. For a Pāla period silver image, see S. Huntington, *The "Pala-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*, fig. 280. The authors also have seen a magnificent silver image of Avalokiteśvara from the Pāla period in a private collection in Ladakh. According to the Ladakhi owners, the piece had been in the family for many generations. Judging from its style, the piece may have been among the eleventh-century materials coming to Tibet at the time of the Second Propagation.
3. This contrasts to Mahāsrī Tārā, who makes *vyākhyāna mudrā* (see cat. no. 150).
4. Other possibilities are Sita Tārā, Sita Viśvamātrī, Pita Tārā, or one of several forms of Śyāma Tārā. Dr. Joseph Dye, Curator of the Asian Collections at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, reports that when the image is held at a certain angle, a third image of Tārā may be seen inside of the column supporting the main image. While we have not seen this feature ourselves, since we were unable to handle the piece at the time of its selection for the exhibition, the feature could be of considerable iconographical importance.
5. From left to right across the front are:

	lotus		lotus	
unknown	gaṇa	cintāmaṇi	gaṇa	unknown

From left to right across the back are:

lotus	cintāmaṇi		cintāmaṇi	lotus
flower	haṁsa	kalaśa	haṁsa	flower

156

ṢAḌAKṢARĪ AVALOKITEŚVARA (TIB. SPYAN RAS GZIGS YI GE DRUG PA JO LUGS; pronounced Chenrayzee yigay drugpa joluk)

Tibeto-Chinese, mixed Late Shar mthun sku and Chinese schools

Ca. late thirteenth or fourteenth century, Mongol Empire or Yuan dynasty

Silver with parcel gilding; the base may be gilt bronze or other alloy of copper (untested)

H: 5 9/16" W: 4 5/8" D: 3"

Mr. and Mrs. John Gilmore Ford

Illustrated in color

One of the most elegant of all Sino-Tibetan metal images, this parcel-gilt silver image of Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs yi ge drug pa jo lugs)<sup>1</sup> retains the bodily convention and facial features of the Pāla tradition, while many of the techniques and the detailing are decidedly Chinese. The vigorously modeled facial features (fig. 79) and upper body contrast sharply with the subtly undulating folds of the drapery in a complex combination of stylistic elements. The almost naturalistic folds of the drapery are based on Chinese prototypes that had been in use in China since the Tang dynasty. For example, virtually identical treatment of the drapery occurs on a Yuan dynasty porcelain sash-bearing Bodhisattva (cat. no. 164). Even the drapery type, which covers the legs in a full skirtlike garment, follows the Chinese manner rather than the Indian (Shar mthun sku) *dhōtī* convention. (Compare to this feature in cat. no. 154, which is of a closely related anatomical convention but is clothed in the Indian manner.) The technique of parcel gilding of silver had been a Chinese technique since the very early part of the Tang dynasty (618-906), but apparently was not widely known in Tibet until the fourteenth century, after the offerings of the Mongol court began to arrive at the Tibetan monasteries.

While it is impossible to be certain of the actual origins of the piece, the quality of workmanship, the accuracy with which the Pāla conventions have been maintained, and the great precision with which the parcel gilding has been done all suggest imperial ateliers of the Mongols, possibly working directly under the oversight of or even including the actual workmanship of the Nepali master Anige.

#### PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *Indo-Asian Art From The John Gilmore Ford Collection* (Baltimore, Maryland: Walters Art Gallery, 1971), 50-51, no. 71; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the *Bodhi* Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 44, fig. 20.

1. For a discussion of the iconography of Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara, see cat. no. 110.





Figure 79. Detail of head, cat. no. 156.

157

BUDDHA-TO-BE ŚĀKYAMUNI TRIUMPHING OVER  
MĀRA (MĀRAVIJAYA)

Tibeto-Chinese, mixed Late Shar mthun sku and  
Chinese schools

Ca. thirteenth or fourteenth century, Mongol Empire or  
Yuan dynasty

Bronze with gold inlay (untested) and "cold gold" paint  
on the face

H: 6 3/8" W: 4 5/8" D: 3 1/4"

Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection  
(69. 114)

Illustrated in color

Slightly more slender of limb and of bodily proportion than the Tibetan convention for the Shar mthun sku, the Chinese interpretation of the Tibetan Bal sku style nonetheless closely follows the parameters for the Pāla-dependent images. The stylistic genealogy of this piece mirrors the complexity of Inner Asian political and cultural intercourse. This complexity becomes apparent when one considers that this piece was:

1. based on a Pāla design convention
2. that was reinterpreted by Newari artists
3. for Tibetan patrons;

4. was made in China (with minor stylistic and technical additions)
5. for Mongol patrons
6. who patronized the Tibetan Sa skya establishment
7. and under the direction of, or in a workshop started by, a Nepali artist named Anige
8. which workshop became the basis of a style that would return to and influence both Tibet and Nepal

Given the manifold political manipulations and interchanges that characterized the history of Inner and East Asia, this complex linkage of style, culture, and religiosity is actually not as exceptional as it might sound. What is perhaps more remarkable is that the style remained so true to the Pāla prototype.

The style of the image is somewhat closer to the two Shar mthun sku images in the exhibition (cat. nos. 133 and 135) than to the central Tibetan, Lhasa idiom and clearly reflects the sculptural tradition introduced into China at the Mongol imperial court by the Nepali artist Anige. There is no way to determine if the image is by his hand or not, although he is known to have sculpted actively during the early part of his career. It seems more likely that the piece is substantially later than the time of Anige, and probably dates from about 1325 to the end of the Yuan (1368). In particular the details of the facial features and the treatment of the neck suggest the fourteenth-century date, but in traditions as conservative as those of Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan Buddhist sculpture, such judgments are only approximations.

The decorations on the robe of the Buddha may seem to western observers to be inconsistent with the presumed asceticism of the Buddha,<sup>1</sup> but in fact they are totally in keeping with the iconography of Śākyamuni in the Mahāyāna tradition. The symbols adorning his robe are the *aṣṭamaṅgala*, or eight auspicious signs (see cat. no. 121 for discussion and drawings).

PUBLISHED:

*Archives of Asian Art* 24 (1970-1971), 115.

1. Until very recently, the Western view of the Buddha was highly colored by the interpretations of the translators of the Pāli texts, who were themselves followers of the Theravādin tradition and who also espoused a post-enlightenment, rationalistic, demythologized version of what they perceived as early (i.e., "true," or "pure") Buddhism. Actually, there have been adorned images of the Buddha since the fifth or sixth century and probably before. The tradition of the rich "Vairocana robes" of Śākyamuni goes back to at least the third century or before in literature. In most Mahāyāna traditions, there is at least one type of Buddha form that displays some sort of enriched apparel. In short, while there are probably universalistic overtones to the apparel, in Mahāyāna iconography, the lavish robe of Śākyamuni is to be expected.

MAITREYA BODHISATTVA (TUṢITA MAITREYA;  
TIB. BYAMS PA; pronounced Jampa)

Tibet, Late Tibetan Bal sku, Nepali workshops (at  
Lhasa?)

Ca. sixteenth to eighteenth century (?)

Copper alloy (untested) with heavy fire gilding and  
blue pigment

H: 24 1/2" W: 8 1/2" D: 7 5/8"

Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, Gift of John West (1963.5)

Previously said to be indeterminably of either Nepali or Tibetan origin,<sup>1</sup> this elegant image of the Bodhisattva Maitreya is actually a superb example of the work that resulted from the artistic patronage of Nepali artists by Tibetans in Tibet. Its Nepali heritage is at once obvious in the elegant lines of the body and the simplified drapery and ornamentation. However, its Tibetan origin is demonstrated by the method of closing the base with the pitch and hammered copper plate, the crossed-*vajra* (Skt. *viśvavajra*) motif on the plate, the method of closing the dedication chambers in the center of the back and on the back of both thighs, the design of the base itself, and the details of the Tibetan design of the *stūpa* in the headdress.

The links with the Pāla school, while chronologically remote, are nevertheless precise and profound. Comparison of this figure to a Nepali image of Avalokiteśvara (cat. no. 101) demonstrates the Pāla heritage transmitted through images of the Nepali tradition. The ultimate source of the style may be traced to Nālandā, as evidenced by a representation of a Bodhisattva from Nālandā (fig. 80). The long, graceful line of the body has persisted over the centuries in the conservative Nepali tradition, and may also reflect a deliberate attempt by the Nepali artists to recapture the earlier "true" style of Buddhism, essentially as manifested in their own sculptural tradition of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Distinctly Chinese features are present in the pedestal and the shallow-relief lotus petals of the base. The pedestal type derives from Tang dynasty China and became common throughout East Asia. However, the aura has been given a distinctly Nepali treatment, with its narrow rim and curvilinear tendrils of "liquid" light. The facial features are strictly Nepali and are clear evidence that the image was made by the artisans of the Nepali cantonment in Lhasa.

Maitreya Bodhisattva is to become the Buddha Maitreya of the future period. Maitreya is currently residing in Tuṣita paradise where, like the Bodhisattva Sumedha (also known as Śvetaketu, who became Śākyamuni Buddha) before him, he perfects his transcendental insight (Skt. *prajñā*) until the time of his birth. About twenty-five thousand years after Śākyamuni, the city of Vārāṇasī will

be called Ketumatī and will be ruled by a *brāhmaṇa* king. His son will become Maitreya Buddha after living a life that parallels the life of Śākyamuni. Maitreya Buddha will



Figure 80. Bodhisattva. Nālandā, Bihar, India. Ca. seventh century.

then preach to three assemblies wherein many beings will realize full enlightenment, and the earth will enter an idyllic golden age.

In Tibet, the worship of Maitreya is an extremely important aspect of lay devotional Buddhism. Many Tibetans make offerings to the poor and do other charitable works in order to help prepare the world for the coming of Buddha Maitreya. This is often called messianic or millennial Buddhism, although the soteriological and cosmological framework differs radically from its Judaic and Christian analogues. The appearance of Maitreya is simply part of the next cycle of an infinite series of cycles of Buddhas of the past and future. Thus the "coming Buddha" is but one of many, with Bhaiṣajyaguru, who currently resides in the pure land of Vaiḍūryavatī, being next in line. Images such as this are often made at the time

of a death in the family, with the intention that the deceased might attain rebirth in Tuṣita and reside there with Maitreya Bodhisattva until the time of his descent to Ketumatī, or in the hopes that the deceased will merit rebirth at the time of Ketumatī Maitreya. At that time, the fortunate one will be able to see and hear in person a true *samyaksambodhi* Buddha and receive a prediction of his or her own future enlightenment.

PUBLISHED:

Pratapaditya Pal, *The Art of Tibet* (New York: The Asia Society, 1969), 145-146, no. 47; Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, 2 vols. (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1974-1978), vol. 1, 166, fig. 296.

1. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, 2 vols. (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1974-1978), vol. 1, 166, fig. 296.

159

UNIDENTIFIED ATTENDANT BODHISATTVA

China, Sino-Tibetan style

Ca. fifteenth century, Ming dynasty (1368-1644)

Copper with fire gilding and blue pigment

H: 18" W: 6" D: 2 3/4"

Collection of The Newark Museum, Gift of C. Suydam Cutting, 1950 (50.146)

Illustrated in color

A rare surviving example of this spectacular style, this stylistically complex image represents the Chinese imperial stylistic synthesis and the culmination of Pāla influence abroad. During the early Ming dynasty, and especially under the Yongle (Yung-lo; reigned 1403-1424) and Xuande (Hsüan-te; reigned 1426-1435) emperors, the bKa' brgyud sect received imperial patronage at the highest level. Presently known records do not specify whether imperially commissioned images were the product of the office that originally worked under the direction of the Nepali artist Anige during the Mongol Empire and Yuan. However, these images are so finely crafted, so richly enhanced by multiple layers of fire gilding, and so superbly detailed in every way that it is quite reasonable to assume that they were the product of imperial workshops.

Stylistically the figure exhibits features and conventions from Pāla India, Nepal, Tibet, and Ming China. The basic anatomy of the figure with its *tribhaṅga* posture, the soft fleshy treatment of the skin surfaces, and a few details of the crown may be traced to Indic prototypes, presumably transmitted through Nepali craftsmen. However, the crown and jewelry have received the direct benefit of Nepali influence. In contrast, much of the

jewelry (such as the pendants hanging from the necklaces), the billowing scarves and sashes, the facial features, and the highly accentuated *tribhaṅga* posture are directly attributable to Chinese additions and modifications. However, the artists themselves would not have been aware of the diverse sources of the stylistic elements. On the contrary, it must be assumed that Chinese craftsmen, probably working under the iconographic tutelage of Tibetan or possibly Nepali artisans, were probably aware of making a "foreign" or perhaps "Indian" iconographic type of image. However, stylistically they probably considered the Sino-Tibetan synthesis, which was accomplished long before in the pre-Yuan Mongol Empire period, to be simply *their own* type of image.

The lack of attributes and/or headdress elements in the crown preclude a positive identification of this figure. With the image removed from its context (tenons on the feet indicate only that it went into a base), one can only surmise what the context might have been on the basis of parallel examples. Since independent or central images are usually strictly frontal, while attendant figures would normally be paired and have bilaterally symmetrical *tribhaṅga* postures, it must be assumed that this is an attendant Bodhisattva on the basis of its thrice-bent posture. It might have been one of a pair, but groups of four and eight are also known.

PUBLISHED:

Eleanor Olson, *Catalog of the Tibetan Collection and other Lamaist articles in the Newark Museum*, 5 vols. (Newark, New Jersey: Newark Museum, 1950, 1961, 1971), vol. 3, 14, 32, pl. 8; Eleanor Olson, *The Newark Museum: 50 Years, a Survey* (Newark: The Newark Museum, 1959), 82; Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal* (New York: Asia Society, 1964), 94, 142, no. 71; Eleanor Olson, *Tantric Buddhist Art* (New York: China House Gallery, 1974), 29, 65; Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya: Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 193, 195, no. 220; Valrae Reynolds, *Tibet: A Lost World: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography* (New York: The American Federation of Arts, 1978), 104; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 524, no. 148A (wherein the image is identified as Tārā); Valrae Reynolds, Amy Heller, and Janet Gyatso, *Catalogue of the Newark Museum Tibetan Collection*, vol. 3, *Sculpture and Painting* (Newark, New Jersey: The Newark Museum, 1986), 95; Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy," *Orientalism* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989), 46, fig. 22.



China, Sino-Tibetan style

Ming dynasty, Yongle mark (1403-1425)

Copper alloy with fire gilding (untested)

H: 17 1/4" W: 13" D: 10 1/4"

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mary B. Lee, C. Bingham Blossom, Dudley S. Blossom III, Laurel B. Kovacik, and Elizabeth B. Blossom in memory of Elizabeth B. Blossom (72.96)

Shown in Dayton, Baltimore, and Newark

This vitally energetic yet conventionally corpulent image of a Buddhist lineage master epitomizes the truly impressive level of attainment of the Sino-Tibetan sculptural schools. Derived in detail from Pāla-dependent Nepali prototypes, the bodily posture of the Mahāsiddha (Tib. *grub thob*) himself, his anatomical treatment, and some of the detailing, such as the garland and crown of flowers, are virtually identical to the Sa skya Bal bris/sku style of the gTsang District. Chinese influences occur in the workmanship, jewelry details, medallions of the armlets and anklets, and detailing of the tips of the lotus petals.

Dated in the Yongle era (1403-1425) of the Ming dynasty, the image appears to have been the work of the imperial workshops and was probably part of an imperial offering either to Tibetan monasteries or to an unknown Tibetan Buddhist monastery in China. There are a substantial number of dated Yongle images, almost all of which are of surpassing quality, and the body of material forms one of the important benchmarks in the history of Tibetan metal images.<sup>1</sup>

Virūpa was one of the most prominent of the Indian tantric masters whose teachings formed the basis of Tibetan Buddhism. The bKa' gdams pas, Sa skya pas, and bKa' brgyud pas all include him in their transmission lineages, especially those connected with the Heruka deities Hevajra and Cakrasaṃvara. The Sa skya pas especially revere him as the prime transmitter of the path-and-fruit (Tib. *lam 'bras*) teachings, as a protégé of the female deity Vajra Nairātmyā, and as a great master of the *anuttarayoga* teachings and practices centered on Hevajra (see the lineage of the Sa skya Bal bris Hevajra, cat. no. 118). There are several versions of the life of this great tantric master. His hagiography in Tibet<sup>2</sup> tells of his expulsion from Somapuri monastery<sup>3</sup> by self-righteous monks (who did not understand the nature of tantric practice) for having eaten meat and drunk wine. Departing from Somapuri (or Nālandā, according to the Sa skya account)<sup>4</sup> amidst many displays of *siddhis* (paranormal powers), he assumed the life of a wandering yogin. After crossing the Ganges, Virūpa sought food from a tavern and sat eating rice and drinking wine for two days and one night, during which

time the sun stood still in the sky. The accounts vary substantially regarding what happened next. However, it is Tāranātha's explanation that best describes the image in the exhibition: "This [wine-selling woman] said he must pay the bill . . . so he pointed his finger towards the sun and held it as with a nail and drunk [more] brandy. As he did not want to set it free, the clocks and guards made mistake[s]. The king who knowing that the Yogi wanted to show his power, gave the price for the brandy and prayed him to let the sun loose. Three days after he went away in the morning."<sup>5</sup> Subsequently Virūpa transmitted his teachings to the Mahāsiddha Ḍombiheruka, and it is through the latter that many of Virūpa's teachings continued their path toward Tibet.<sup>6</sup>

This image of Virūpa portrays him in the act of pointing at the sun, "nailing" it in place in the sky while he continues to drink wine. This became the standard format of his portrait throughout Tibetan Buddhist iconography, so Virūpa may be recognized either by this position or by the garlands of flowers, symbolizing initiation by Ḍākinis, that became one of his main attributes. This sculpture of Virūpa depicts a *siddha* at the peak of his powers, in the act of demonstrating his mastery of self and of nature, a mastery that is celebrated and communicated by the extraordinary vitality of this sculptural rendition.

#### PUBLISHED:

Heather Karmay, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, Ltd., 1975), 83, no. 63; Gilles Béguin, *Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya* (Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 104, 106, no. 63; Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981), 520, pl. 146B; Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), 115, fig. 145.

1. Ironically, the spectacularly refined Yongle metal images are largely unappreciated by traditional scholars of Chinese Buddhist art, who generally insist that no Buddhist sculpture of merit was produced after the Song dynasty. This image, the Sino-Tibetan attendant Bodhisattva (cat. no. 159), and the Tibeto-Chinese Ṣaḍaḥsari (cat. no. 156) eloquently dispute this view.
2. James B. Robinson, trans., *Buddha's Lions: The Lives of the Eighty-Four Siddhas* (Berkeley, California: Dharma Publishing, 1979), 27-32; Chogay Trichen, *The History of the Sakya Tradition* (Bristol: Ganesha Press, 1983), 8-12; Bhupendranath Datta, trans., *Mystic Tales of Lāmā Tāranātha: A Religio-Sociological History of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (1944; reprint, Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1957), 12-17; David Templeman, trans., *Tāranātha's bKa' babs. bdun. ldan.: The Seven Instruction Lineages by Jo. Nang. Tāranātha* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1983), 15-21.
3. That is, Somapura, which is generally accepted to have been at the monastery site now known as Pāhārpur in northern Bangladesh.
4. Trichen, *History*, 10.
5. Datta, *Mystic Tales of Lāmā Tāranātha*, 12-13.
6. Virūpa is also known from his writings, at least fourteen of which are preserved in the Tibetan bsTan 'gyur. See Robinson, *Buddha's Lions*, 289-290.



161

AVALOKITEŚVARA (TIB. SPYAN RAS GZIGS; pronounced Chenrayzee)

(ONE OF A PAIR OF ATTENDANT FIGURES TO A LOST CENTRAL IMAGE)

Northeastern China, either Beijing or Chengde (Ch'engde), Pāla Revival style

Qing dynasty, Qianlong era (1736-1795), dated by inscription

Bronze (untested) with cold gilding

H: 12 5/8" W: 3 5/8" D: 3 1/4"

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Kate Read Blacque, in memory of her husband, Valentine Alexander Blacque, 1937, by exchange (48.30.15)

162

MAÑJUŚRĪ (TIB. 'JAM DBYANGS; pronounced Jamyang)

(ONE OF A PAIR OF ATTENDANT FIGURES TO A LOST CENTRAL IMAGE)

Northeastern China, either Beijing or Chengde (Ch'engde), Pāla Revival style

Qing dynasty, Qianlong era (1736-1795), dated by inscription

Bronze (untested) with cold gilding

H: 12 5/8" W: 3 1/2" D: 3"

Garrigues Collection, San Francisco<sup>1</sup>

As manifestations of the Buddha Śākyamuni's compassion (Avalokiteśvara) and transcendental wisdom (Mañjuśrī), these two Bodhisattvas appear as his attendants in many situations, especially where the Dharma is being taught. This pair of images would have stood to either side of an image of the Buddha, with Avalokiteśvara to the proper right (viewer's left) and Mañjuśrī to the proper left.

Except for a single iconographic study,<sup>2</sup> the metal images of the Chinese workshops of Qing dynasty China have been summarily ignored by scholars, even though they constitute an extensive and art historically significant body of material. Even if it were not artistically interesting, this body of images would be important as a document of the massive iconographic and stylistic scholarship that was dedicated to the production of complete pantheons of numerous texts and *maṇḍalas* in what are often close copies of the southern Magadha style. Comparisons of this and the following image of Mañjuśrī to previously cited examples of Kurkihār images (figs. 73 and 74) demonstrate that the sculptors must have had an actual Kurkihār piece to copy. The details of how this came about are not known, although it is known that Kurkihār-style images survived in Tibet into the present century.

The Qianlong images were made to offer to the many

temples and for use in the several palaces of the Qing dynasty and were apparently made in large numbers by what must have been a veritable assembly line of workers.<sup>3</sup> The workers were undoubtedly supervised by monks working under the direction of the Qianlong emperor's personal Tibetan Buddhist advisor, the *lcang chia hutukto*, Rol pa'i rdo rje, often called the "Grand Lama of Peking" by early authors.

The technique of modeling the wax is quite different from the usual Tibetan method. For many of these images the wax was simply carved rather roughly with a sharp implement into the required forms, without the benefit of the subtleties that a truly sensitive modeler can contribute. The detailing that would have been chased and chiseled into the surface of the image in the Tibetan context has instead been carved in the wax, and thus the same sense of refinement is not present. Because of these technical variations in production, the images of this school are invariably comparatively stiff and have a raw, or unfinished, appearance. However, as can be seen from this and other images of the school, the idiom possesses considerable vigor.

1. We are indebted to Terese Tse Bartholomew for bringing this image to our attention.
2. Walter Eugene Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons* (1937; reprint, New York: Paragon Book Reprint, 1965).
3. The usual "auction catalogue" attribution of all of these figures to the set published by Clark is quite fictional. There were at least thirty temples plus a number of palaces and possibly other institutions and family estates that each had large sets of figures. A reasonable estimate of the number of images per institution is one thousand or more. Thus, there were probably some thirty thousand to thirty-five thousand Qing dynasty images in just the Beijing and Chengde areas alone.

163

AMITĀYUS (TIB. TSE DPAG ME; pronounced Tsaypagmay)

Northeastern China, either Beijing or Chengde, Pāla Revival style

Ca. eighteenth century

Bronze (untested)

H: 8 3/4" W: 4 1/2" D: 2 3/8"

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection (B62 B23)

This image, from a set of unknown size, represents a completely different phase of the "Pāla revival school" of north China. Executed in a dry copyist's manner in an obviously archaistic style, the image is clearly a copy of Pāla image conventions that had progressed through several stages of development and adaptation in the Tibetan cultural sphere prior to export to China. The elaborate throne back in particular is in the Bal sku style of the Nepali

artists in Tibet (compare for example to the throne back in the early Tibetan Bal bris painting of Vajrasattva, cat. no. 116). The figure of Amitāyus conforms very closely to the Pāla convention, and one can only assume that the artist worked under the direction of an historically aware Tibetan master or worked directly from models.

164

# UNIDENTIFIED SASH-BEARING BODHISATTVA

China, possibly Dehua or Jingdezhen,<sup>1</sup> Sino-Tibetan Bal sku

Ca. fifteenth century

Clear glazed porcelain with cast sections and sprigged detailing

H: 16 15/16" W: 10 1/4" D: 6"

Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

Although the identity of the figure is uncertain,<sup>2</sup> as are its origin and date, there can be no doubt regarding the stylistic roots of this figure. The cow's face (Skt. *gomukha*) torso, the drapery conventions, and most especially the jewelry are detailed copies of Tibetan Bal sku stylistic conventions. The only Chinese stylistic elements are the face and the lower garment.

With the lack of dated sculptural images in the Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan complex of style, the "close dating" of any image must be considered tenuous. However, based on a detailed comparison to other images of the fifteenth century, it is possible to suggest that the Bodhisattva falls within those parameters.

Iconographically the image presents a puzzle. The attribute is the sash draped across the front of the figure. A careful examination of the drapery over the proper left shoulder indicates the continuation of the line of the drapery and where it curved into the missing left hand, while the end of the sash is still attached to the left forearm of the figure. Further, there is no sign of a lotus or another attribute having been attached to the *prabhāvalī*, which would have been necessary if a protrusion of the fragile ceramic extended much above the left shoulder, where the attribute of a Bodhisattva typically would be. Thus, the sash is apparently the only attribute, but a sash-bearing Bodhisattva is not a standard image type in either Tibetan or Chinese Buddhist iconography. However, sash-carrying and sash-waving Bodhisattvas occasionally occur in the *raigō* (Chin. *laiyin*) paintings and sculptures of Japan. The figures bearing sashes are part of the entourage of Bodhisattvas who accompany Amitābha to greet deceased persons and welcome (Jap. *raigō*) them into Sukhāvati.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore possible that this sash-bearing Bodhisattva may have been one of these Bodhisattvas of Sukhāvati, in which case it was probably placed in a setting with a now

indeterminable number of other Bodhisattvas and with a large image of Amitābha in the center. Another possibility is that the Bodhisattva occurred in an esoteric context. He wears the trilobed *merumukutā* headdress and the crown of the five Jina Buddhas, indicating his mastery of yogic processes. Accordingly, he may have been another type of Bodhisattva in the entourage of one of the Jina Buddhas or of the Ādi Buddha, such as those seen in the upper register of the thirteenth-century painting of Vajrasattva (cat. no. 111). In either case, it is difficult to imagine that this porcelain figure was not a subsidiary figure in some greater scheme.

## PUBLISHED:

Sherman E. Lee and Wai-kam Ho, *Chinese Art Under the Mongols* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), no. 24; P. J. Donnelly, *Blanc de Chine: the Porcelain of Tehua in Fukien* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 131-132, pl. 70a; Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, vol. 1, *Sculpture* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1974), 167, fig. 299.

1. The color of the ceramic is not that of *qingbai*, to which it was attributed by Lee and Ho. See Sherman E. Lee and Wai-kam Ho, *Chinese Art Under the Mongols* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), no. 24.
2. The figure has been identified as Mañjuśrī (Lee and Ho, no. 24), and as Avalokiteśvara by Donnelly. See P. J. Donnelly, *Blanc de Chine: the Porcelain of Tehua in Fukien* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 132. However, without the usual attributes of either Bodhisattva, there is no basis for either of these identifications.
3. Whether these sash-bearing Bodhisattvas are "dancing" or offering the sashes is a problem I have been unable to resolve. The *raigō/laiyin* or "welcoming" iconography is best known from Japanese examples, although the type originated in China. It is found in the last three of the sixteen visualizations of Queen Vaidehī as described in the *Guan wuliang shoufu jing* (*Kuan wu liang shou fo Ching*). See *Taishō shinshu daizōkyō*, ed. Junjirō Takakusu and Kaikyoku Watanabe (Tokyo: Daizōshuppankabushiki kaisha, 1924-1934), 365. The subject is represented in many Dunhuang paintings. Unfortunately, the secondary Bodhisattvas are almost never published in sufficient detail to be studied iconographically.

165

# SĀCCHA (TIB. TSHA TSHA) OF AMITĀYUS

China, Dehua, Fujian province, Sino-Tibetan style

Ca. eighteenth century, Qing dynasty

Porcelain, press molded

H: 4 1/2" W: 1 1/4" D: 1 3/8"

Collection of The Newark Museum, Gift of Mrs. M. W. Bryan in memory of Frances G. Wickes, 1968 (68.84)

*Tsha tsha* are defined by Tibetan lexicons as simply stamped clay *stūpas* or figures that are placed inside *stūpas* or in places of veneration. However, there is much more to the process of making the small tablets than appears at first glance. The term *tsha tsha* is an Indic loan word from *sāccha*, which in turn is probably derived, as Tucci suggests, from *sat-chāya*, "perfect image" and also "reproduced image."<sup>1</sup> The art form of making multiple images by pressing clay into molds had its origins as early as the

Maurya period (third century B.C.) in India and came to a florescence in the Śuṅga period (first century B.C.). At a similarly early date, the idea of making multiple images entered Buddhism, as reflected in the following passage of the *Lotus Sūtra* (Skt. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*):

Persons who make offerings to [the relics of past Buddhas] . . .  
 Shall erect myriads of millions of kinds of stūpas . . .  
 There are even children who in play  
 Gather sand and make it into Buddha-stūpas.  
 Persons like these  
 Have all achieved the Buddha Path.  
 If any persons for the Buddha's sake  
 Erect images . . .  
 They have all achieved the Buddha Path . . . .  
 Even children in play,  
 With grass, sticks, and brushes  
 Or with their fingernails,  
 Draw Buddha images,  
 Persons like these,  
 Gradually accumulating merit  
 And perfecting thoughts of great compassion,  
 Have all achieved the Buddha Path.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the emphasis upon the making and veneration of Buddha images and *stūpas* in early Mahāyāna Buddhism,<sup>3</sup> it is not surprising that the practice of making *sāccha* developed.<sup>4</sup> Although thousands of unfired *sāccha* have been found at Nālandā and other Pāla sites in India,<sup>5</sup> providing ample evidence of their production in the region, it is in the extra-Magadha regions that these objects began to be fired routinely. Well-fired examples from other parts of India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand exist in profusion.<sup>6</sup>

The Tibetans began early in the Second Propagation period to make *tsha tsha* and have continued the practice to the present day. Indeed, it is completely appropriate to suggest that the vehicle reached its highest artistic perfection in the hands of the Tibetans. There are probably thousands of designs. Virtually any popular deity has had its image made in the *tsha tsha* format. There are even traditionally made wooden shrines with the interior covered with "collected" *tsha tsha* each glued in place by an owner who wished to accumulate their talismanic effect in one place.

One of the main uses of *tsha tsha* is to fill *chos rtens* (pronounced chorten, literally, "Dharma receptacles"; Skt. *stūpas*) with "relics," i.e. images, of the Buddha or models of the eight great *stūpas* epitomizing the life of the Buddha. To this end literally billions of *tsha tsha* have been produced.<sup>7</sup> It is fairly common that the ashes of a teacher were mixed into clay and that the resulting *tsha tsha* was then stored in a *stūpa* dedicated to him. It is also common for small *tsha tsha* houses (Tib. *tsha tsha khang*) to be

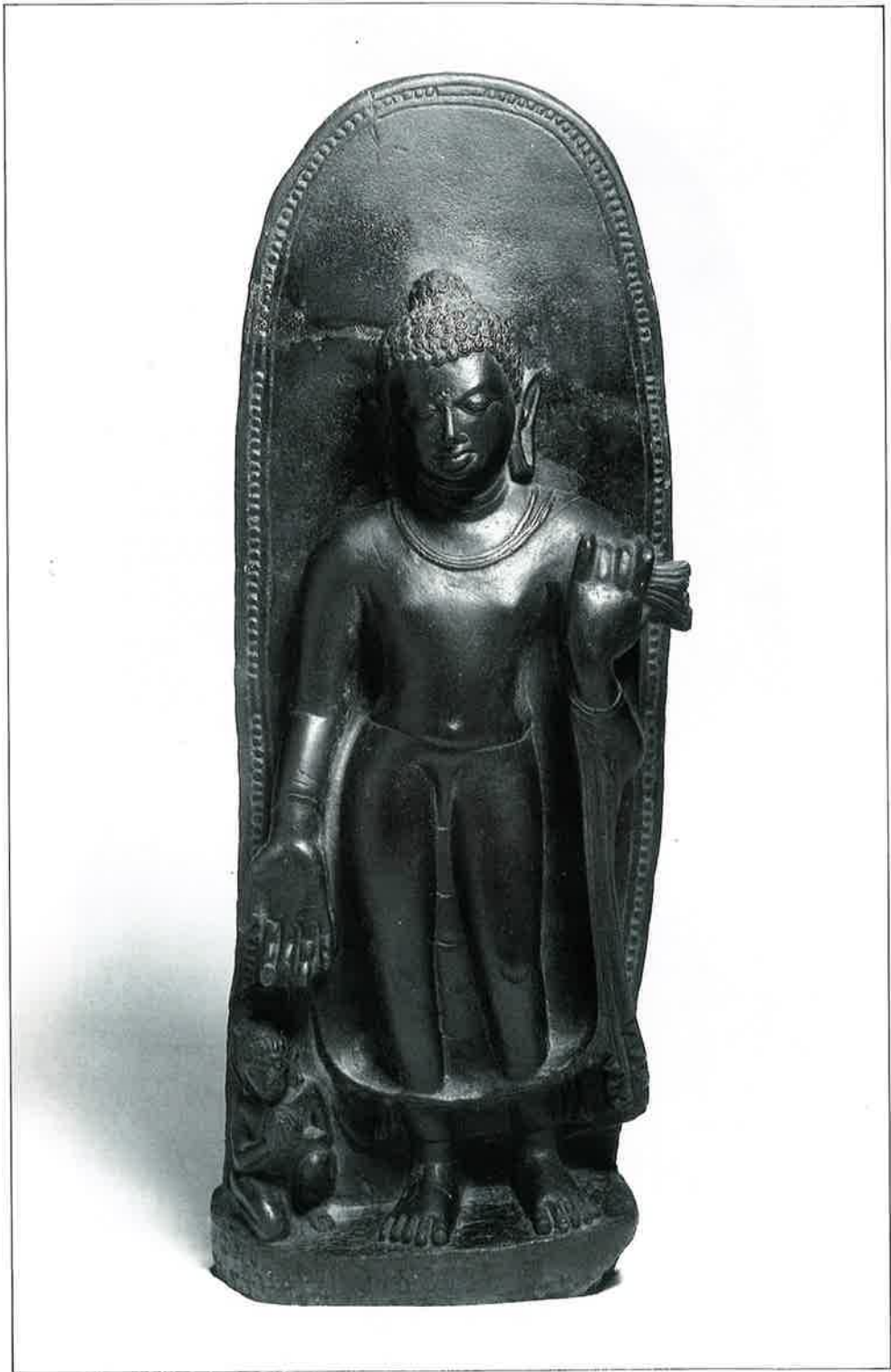
erected near monasteries to receive *tsha tsha* and other religious offerings.<sup>8</sup>

As one of the final representatives of this vastly complex medium of expression, this *tsha tsha* from China embodies many characteristics of the whole process of making such offerings throughout the Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan religious complex. It is strictly a Tibetan design and other examples in this design, made in unfired clay, are known from throughout the Tibetan realm. Yet this example, presumably a Chinese imperial commission, was done in the distinctive porcelain of the Dehua region. Cast from a finely made mold, the detailing approximates that of metal images of the period. This object illustrates the stylistic culmination of the *tsha tsha* tradition in fine-quality porcelain. In spite of its temporal distance from the Pāla period, and the long journey the style made from India to Nepal, Tibet, and China over the centuries, the figure and his lotus pedestal are strongly reminiscent of their Pāla ancestors.

PUBLISHED:

Valrae Reynolds, Amy Heller, and Janet Gyatso, *Catalogue of the Newark Museum Tibetan Collection*, vol. 3, *Sculpture and Painting* (Newark, New Jersey: The Newark Museum, 1986), 49, fig. 13e.

1. Giuseppe Tucci, *Stupa: Art, Architectonics and Symbolism*, English version of *Indo-Tibetica* 1, ed. Lokesh Chandra, trans. Uma Marina Vesci (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988), 54-55. However, it is also likely that the term *sāccha* is simply an onomatopoeic rendering of the sound of the wet clay being pressed into the mold.
2. Leon Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 38-39.
3. *Sūtras* that describe practices would seem *ex post facto* to be describing activities already in place. Since the *Lotus Sūtra* is generally held to be more or less complete by the first century and the verse portion of it to be the earlier part of it, it follows that the passage just quoted must be from around the beginning of the Christian era or slightly before. This would place the origin of the practice prior to the beginning of the Christian era.
4. It is important to note that almost all of the early Indian Buddhist *sāccha* that we have seen are unfired. This would account for the loss of a great many, which simply would have reverted to lumps of clay. The processing of clay into *tsha tsha* is still practiced in Tibet, with the unfired production being consigned to a rapidly flowing river at day's end.
5. They are also known from Kashmir. They are extremely fragile, especially the unfired ones, and we have seen boxes of them crumbling into dust in both museum and privately held collections. On the whole they have not been highly prized by either museums or by most collectors.
6. There is a major lacuna in scholarship concerning these objects. While they are accounted for in virtually every museum and terracotta exhibition, no major monograph has yet been written on the Buddhist *sāccha*.
7. While awesome in Euro-American cultural terms, a million of something is not such an awesome number to Tibetan Buddhists. A million repetitions of some activity or *mantra* is often carried out in actuality. In 1969 we witnessed a Tibetan woman at Bodh Gayā who was well into her second million full-body prostrations at the site of the Buddha's enlightenment. Doing them on wooden panels to protect her from the concrete, she had actually worn holes in three sets of inch-thick hardwood boards where the woolen pads she used to protect her hands slid along the surface. She had been performing the prostrations for two and one-half years at the time we saw her and, as we were told on a later visit to the site, when she finished her second million, she stopped, said goodbye, and went home. She had accomplished her vow, and that was all there was to it. With such numbers commonplace in the actual practice of Tibetan soteriological methodologies, a billion (i.e., 1,000 x 1,000,000) is not an unreasonable estimate—all it takes is one thousand people to make such a vow.
8. For a detailed account of the practice see Giuseppe Tucci, *Stupa: Art, Architectonics and Symbolism*, 53-109.



1.  
Buddha. India, Bihar, Bhagalpur District, Sultāngañj.  
Ca. sixth or seventh century.





2.  
Śiva and Pārvatī. Probably India, Bihar. Ca. seventh  
century.



3.  
Sūrya. Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha. Ca.  
seventh century.



4.  
Mañjuśrī Kumāra. Probably India, Bihar, southern  
Magadha. Ca. second half of eighth or early ninth  
century.





5.  
Maitreya Bodhisattva. Probably India, Bihar, Magadha  
region, possibly Kurkihār. Ca. early ninth century.





6.  
Śyāma Tārā. Probably India, Bihar, Magadha region.  
Ca. ninth century.



7.  
Śyāma Tārā. Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha,  
possibly Nālandā. Ca. mid-ninth century.





8.  
Kanaka Prajñāpāramitā. Probably India, Bihar, northern  
Magadha, possibly Nālandā. Ca. mid-ninth century.



9.  
Buddha's Descent from Trāyastriṃśa Heaven. Probably  
India, Bihar, northern Magadha. Ca. third quarter ninth  
century.





10.  
Sūrya. Eastern India or Bangladesh, possibly Monghyr  
District of Bihar. Ca. ninth century.



11.  
Queen Māyādevī Giving Birth to Siddhārtha  
(Śākyamuni Buddha). Probably India, Bihar, southern  
Magadha. Ca. tenth century.





12.  
Mārīcī, Buddhist Goddess of the Dawn. Probably India,  
Bihar, southern Magadha. Ca. tenth century.



13.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Probably India, Bihar, northern Magadha, possibly  
Nālandā. Ca. late ninth or tenth century.





14.  
Buddha with Eight Buddha Life Scenes and Tārā.  
Probably India, Bihar, possibly Nalanda or Monghyr  
district. Ca. tenth century.



15.  
Crowned Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over  
Māra. Probably India, Bihar, Nālandā. Ca. mid-to-late  
tenth century.





16.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha. Ca. tenth  
century.

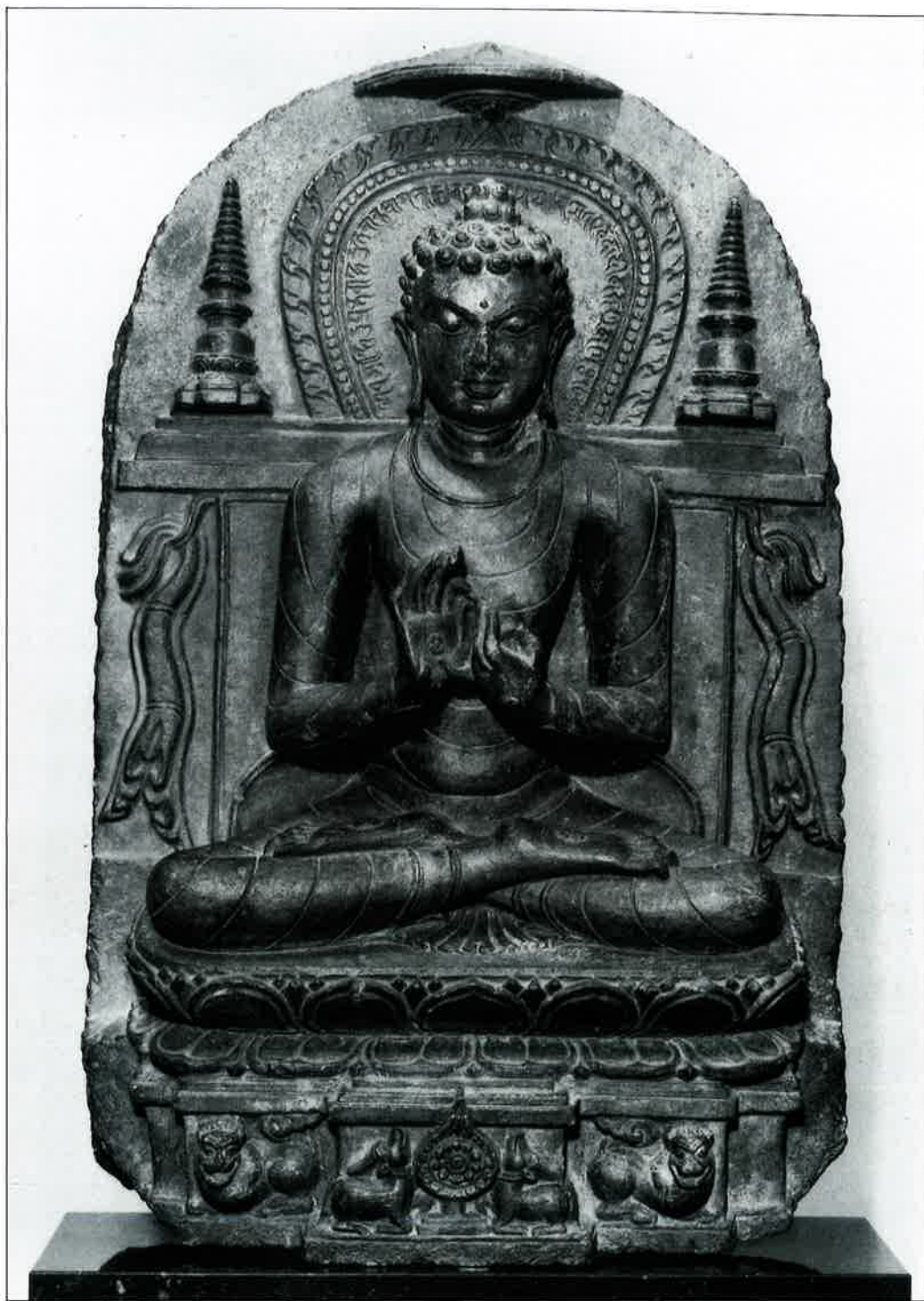


17.  
Śyāma Tārā. Probably India, Bihar, southern Magadha.  
Ca. tenth century.





18.  
Śiva and Pārvatī. Eastern India or Bangladesh, possibly  
western or central Bengal. Ca. tenth century.



19.  
Śākyamuni Buddha's First Sermon. Probably India,  
Bihar, Nālandā. Ca. late tenth or early eleventh century.





20.  
Sūrya. Probably Bangladesh, possibly Chittagong  
District. Ca. late tenth century.



21.  
Dancing Gaṇeśa. Eastern India or Bangladesh.  
Ca. eleventh century.

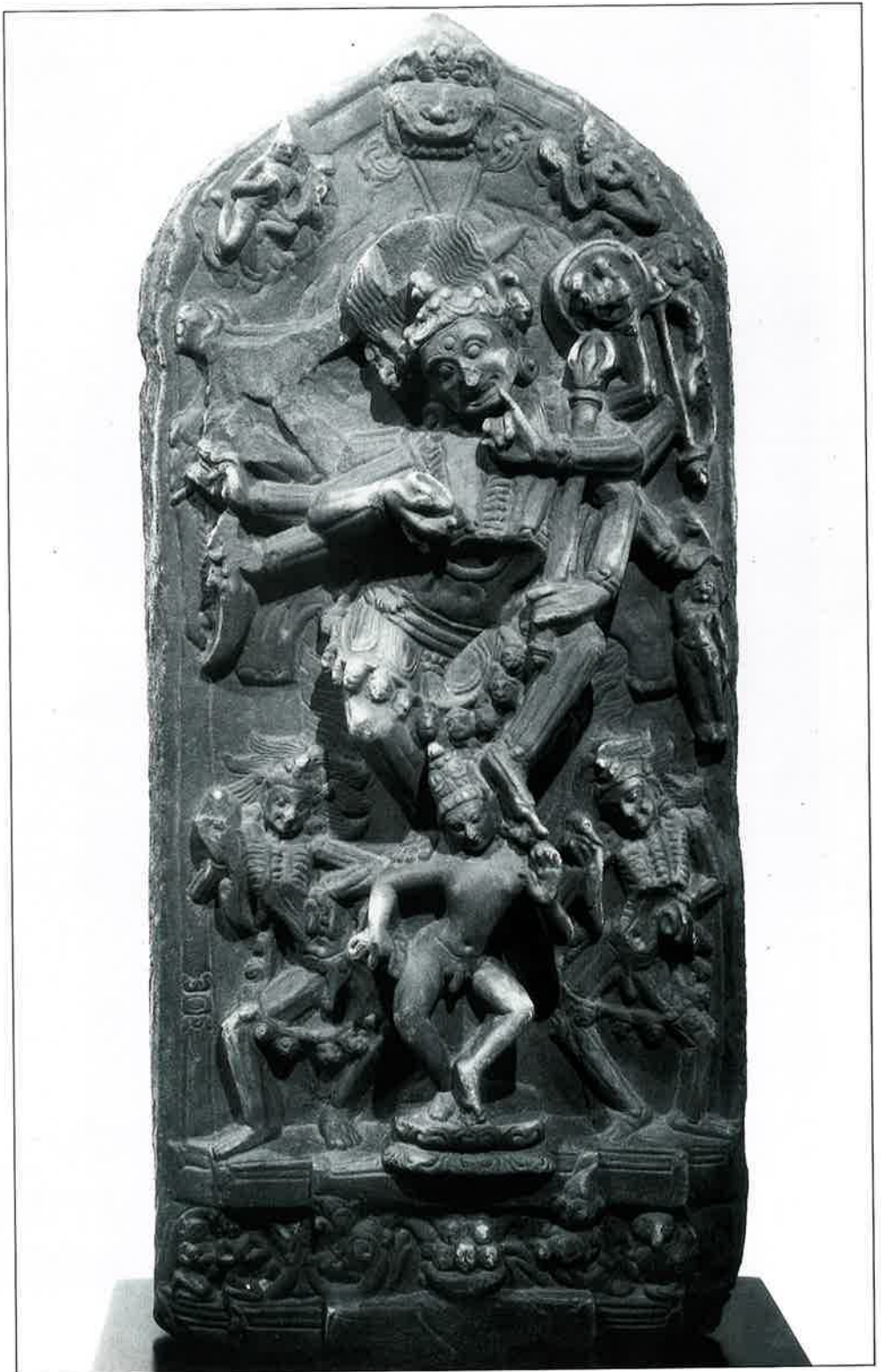




22.  
Pillar Capital with Double Image of Garuḍa. Probably  
West Bengal, India, or Bangladesh, possibly ancient  
Vaṅga or Vardhamāna. Ca. mid-to-late eleventh  
century.



23.  
The Jain Tirthamkara Pārśva(nātha). Possibly  
Bangladesh, Dhaka District. Ca. eleventh century.



24.  
The Goddess Cāmuṇḍā. Found in Bangladesh, Rajshahi  
(formerly Bogra) District. Ca. eleventh century.



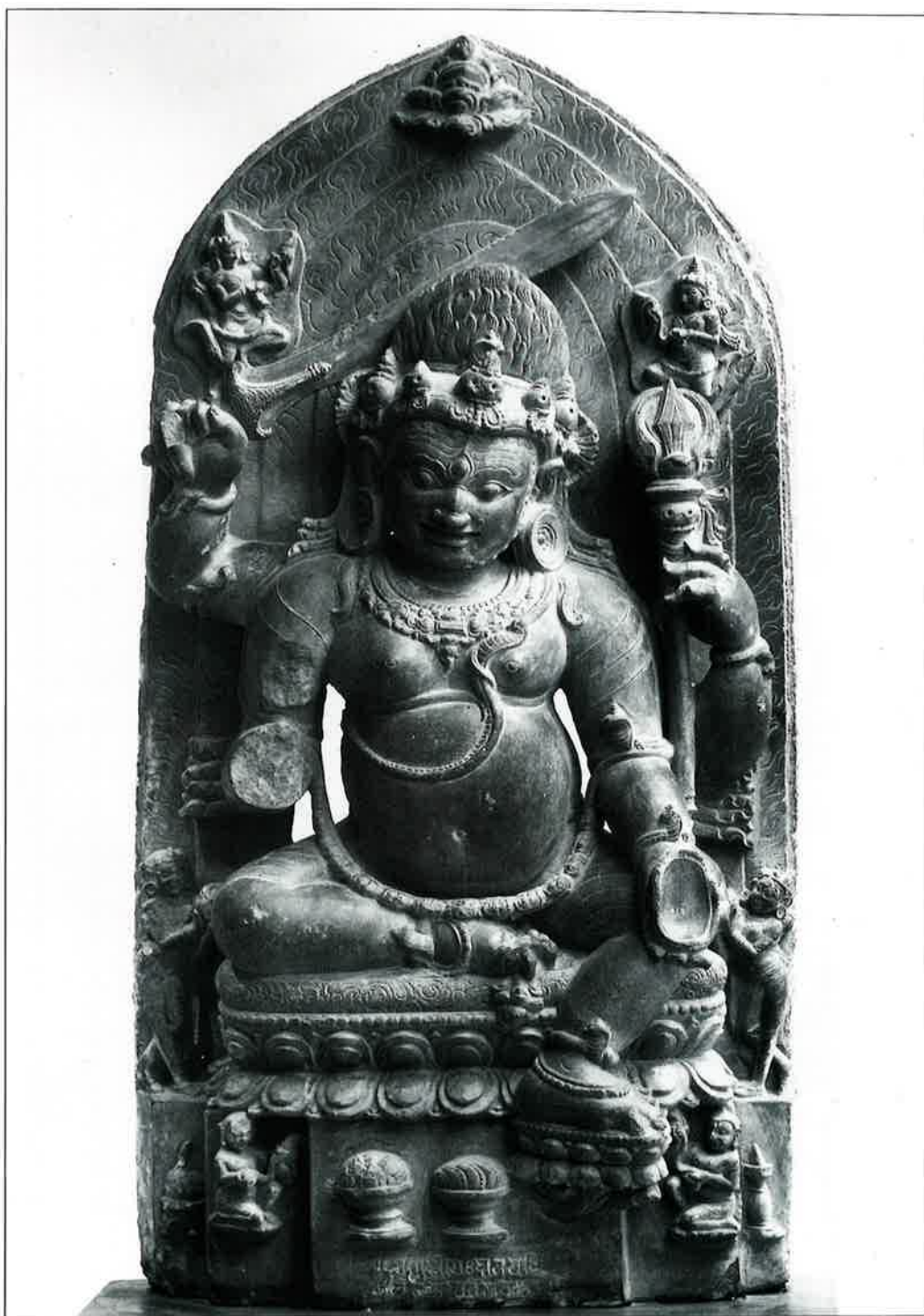


25.  
Mañjuśrī Kumāra. Probably Bangladesh, central or  
southeastern Bengal. Ca. eleventh century.





26.  
Mahākāla. Probably India, Bihar. Ca. eleventh century.

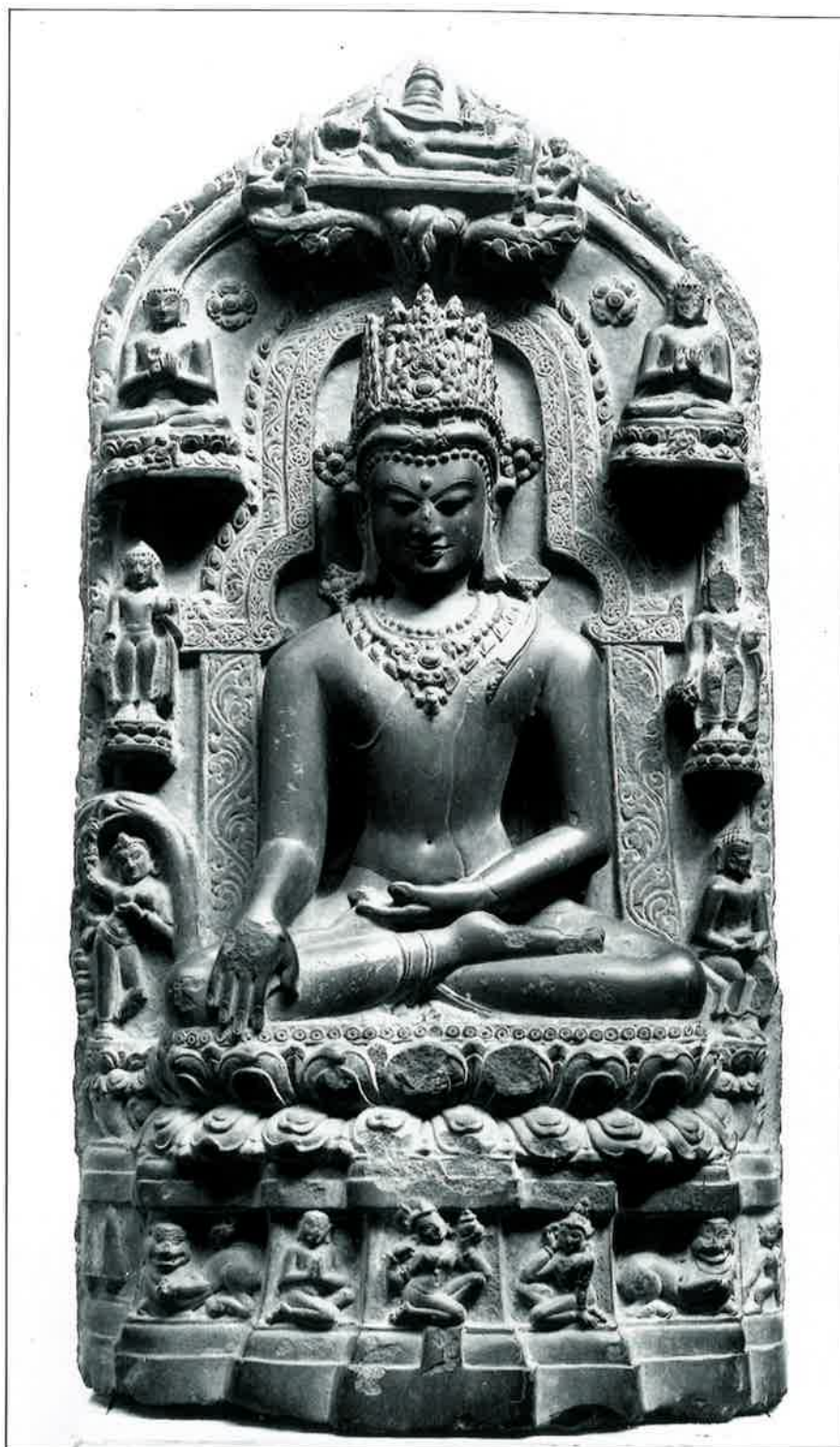


27.  
Mahākāla. Probably India, Bihar. Ca. eleventh or  
twelfth century.



28.  
Śiva Bhairava. Probably India, Bihar. Ca. eleventh  
century.





31.  
Crowned Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over  
Māra. Probably India, Bihar, possibly southern  
Magadha. Ca. twelfth century.





32.  
Pārvatī. Found in India, Bihar, Monghyr District, at  
Jaynagar/Hasanpur. Ca. late eleventh century.



33.  
Khasarpaṇa Lokeśvara. Probably India, Bihar, northern  
Magadha, Nālandā. Ca. late eleventh or early twelfth  
century.



34.  
Celestial Musician. Probably northern Bangladesh.  
Ca. late eleventh or twelfth century.





36.  
Viṣṇu Trivikrama with Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. Probably  
Bangladesh, Dhaka District. Ca. twelfth century.





37.  
Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. Probably  
Bangladesh, northern Bengal region. Ca. twelfth  
century.



38.  
Vajra Tārā. Possibly India, Bihar, northern Magadha,  
possibly Nālandā. Ca. late eleventh or twelfth century.



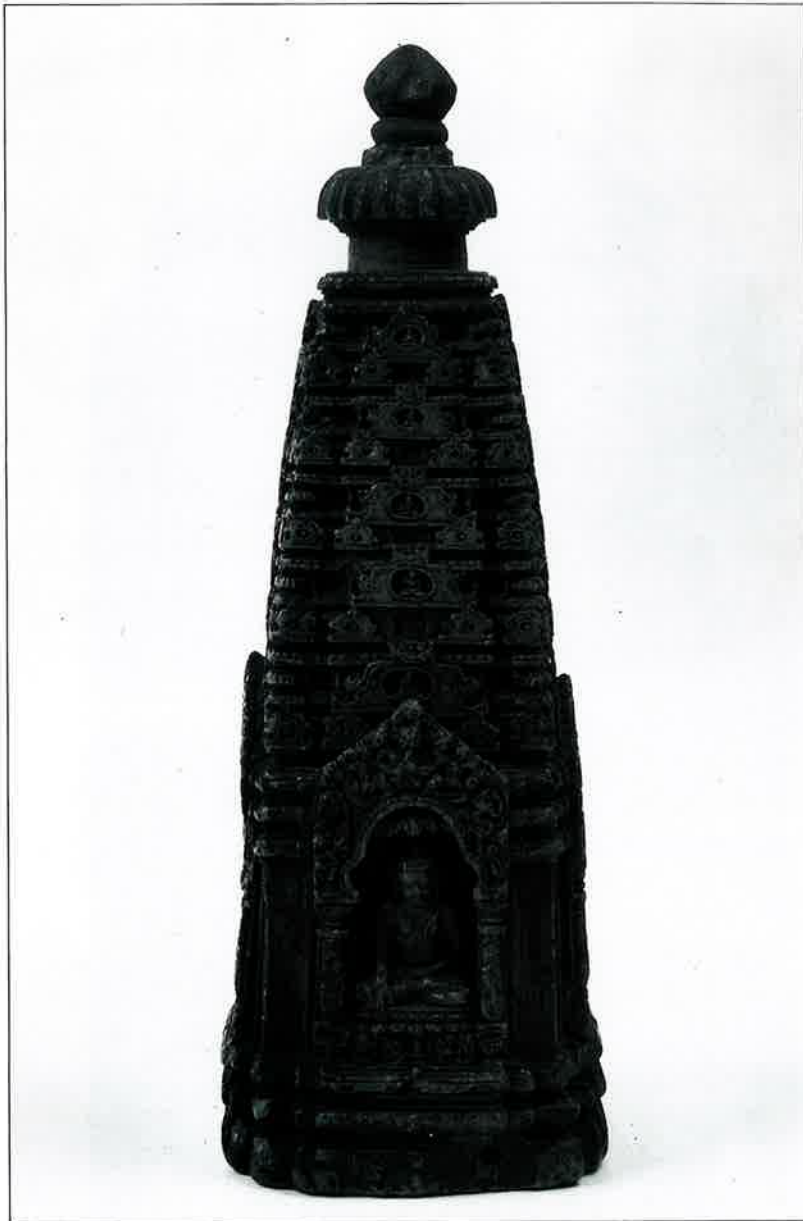


39.  
Śiva in Meditation. Probably Bangladesh, central or  
north-central Bengal. Ca. twelfth century.



40.  
Sūrya. India, West Bengal, "Gaṅgā Sāgarī" (Sagar  
Island). Ca. twelfth century.





41.  
Miniature Buddhist Temple. Eastern India or  
Bangladesh (?). Ca. twelfth century.



42.  
Buddha. Probably India, Bihar. Ca. sixth century.



43.  
Śiva and Pārvatī. Probably India, Bihar, Nālandā.  
Ca. early to mid-ninth century.



45.  
Viṣṇu. Probably southeastern Bangladesh. Ca. mid-  
ninth century.

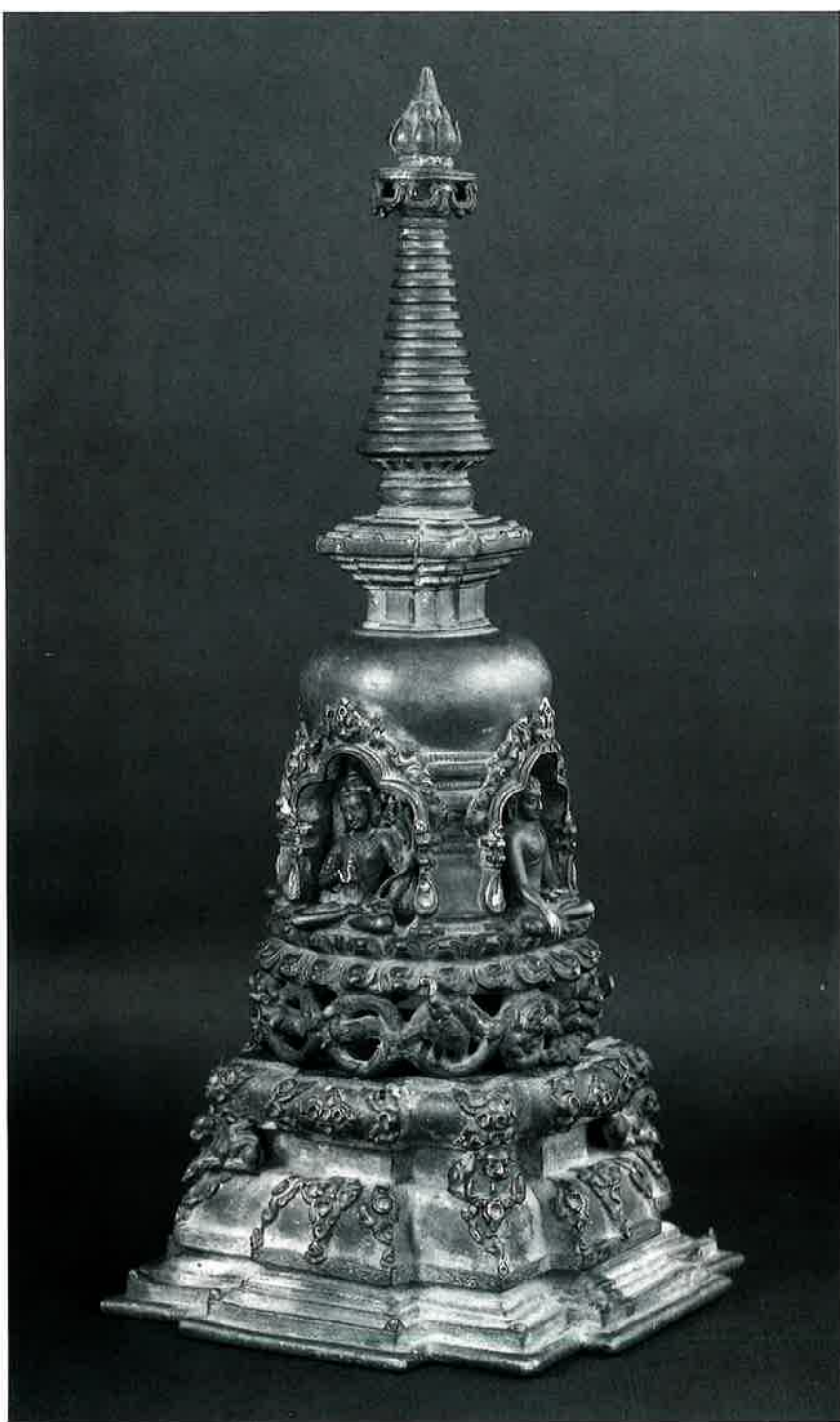




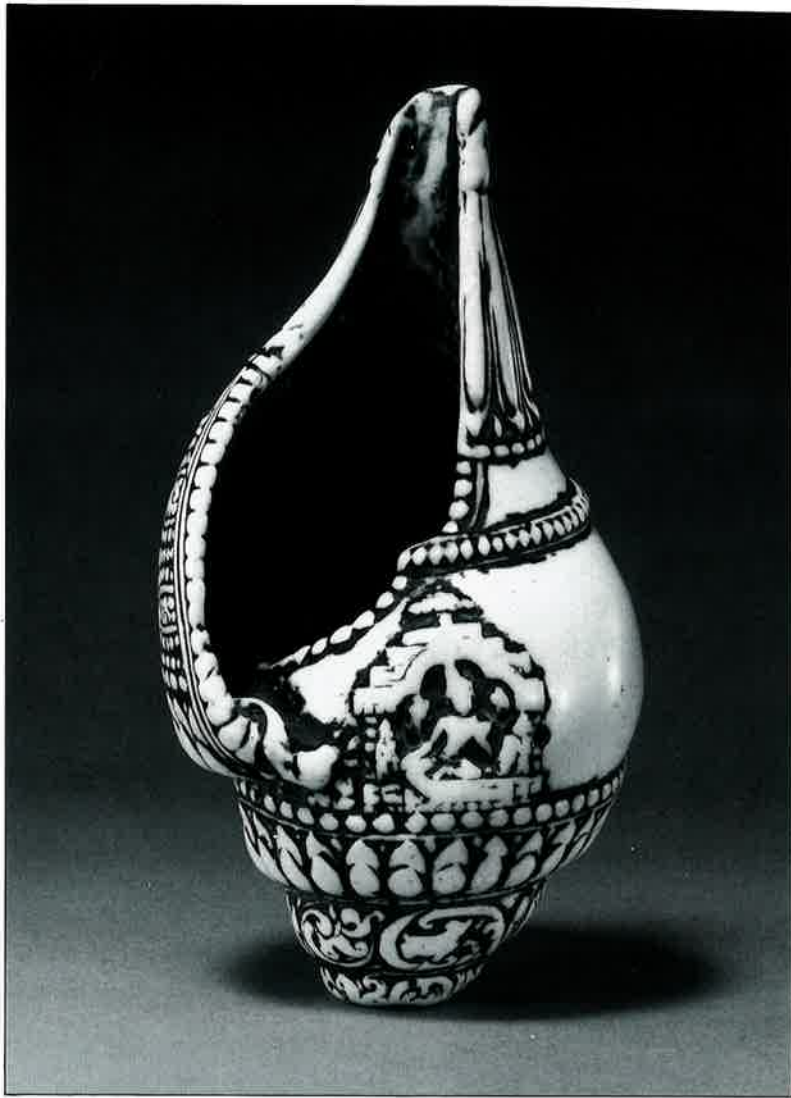
47.  
Buddha. Eastern India or Bangladesh. Ca. eleventh  
century.



48.  
Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. Probably  
Bangladesh. Ca. twelfth century.

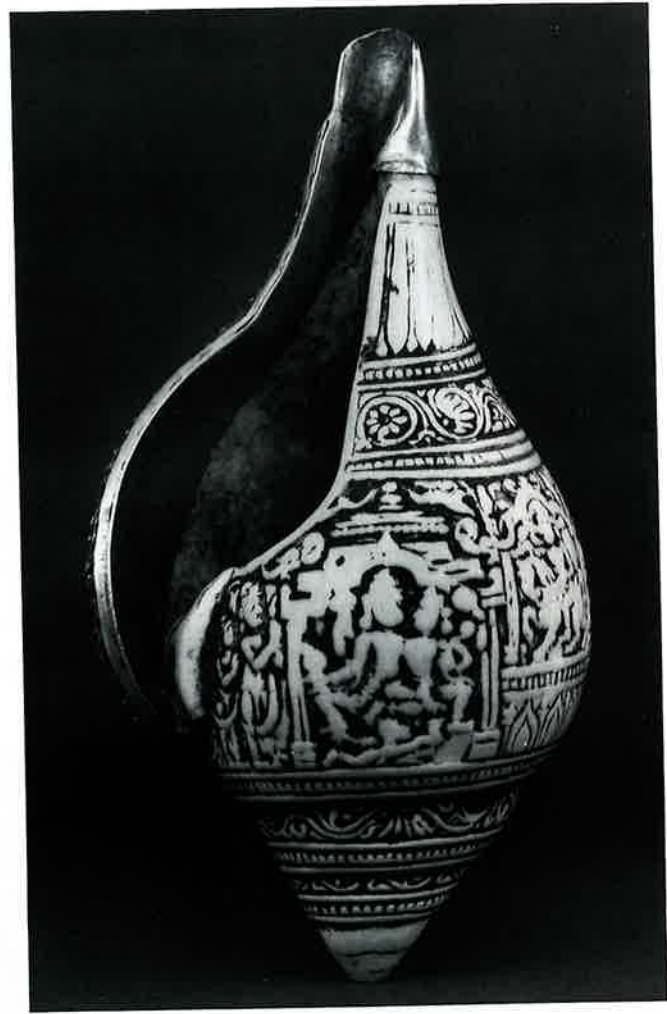


50.  
Votive *Stūpa*. Eastern India, Bangladesh, or Himalayan  
region (?). Ca. twelfth century.



51.  
Carved Conch Shell Trumpet. Eastern India or  
Bangladesh. Ca. twelfth century.





52.  
Carved Conch Shell Water Receptacle. Eastern India or  
Bangladesh. Ca. twelfth century.



53.  
*Sāccha* with *Śyāma Tārā*. Eastern India or Bangladesh.  
Ca. eighth century.



54.  
*Sāccha* with a Bodhisattva. Eastern India or Bangladesh.  
Ca. eighth century.



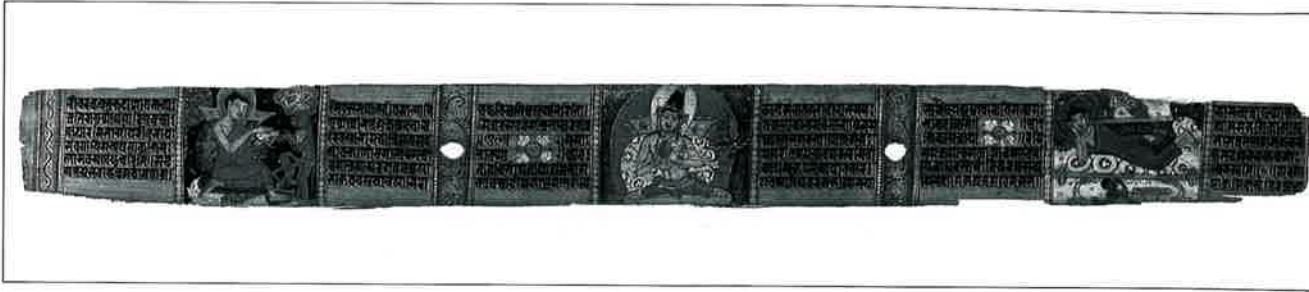
55.  
*Sāccha* with a Bodhisattva. Eastern India or Bangladesh.  
Ca. eighth century.





56.

*Sāccha* with Māravijaya Scene at Bodh Gayā. Probably India, Bihar, Nālandā. Ca. tenth or eleventh century.

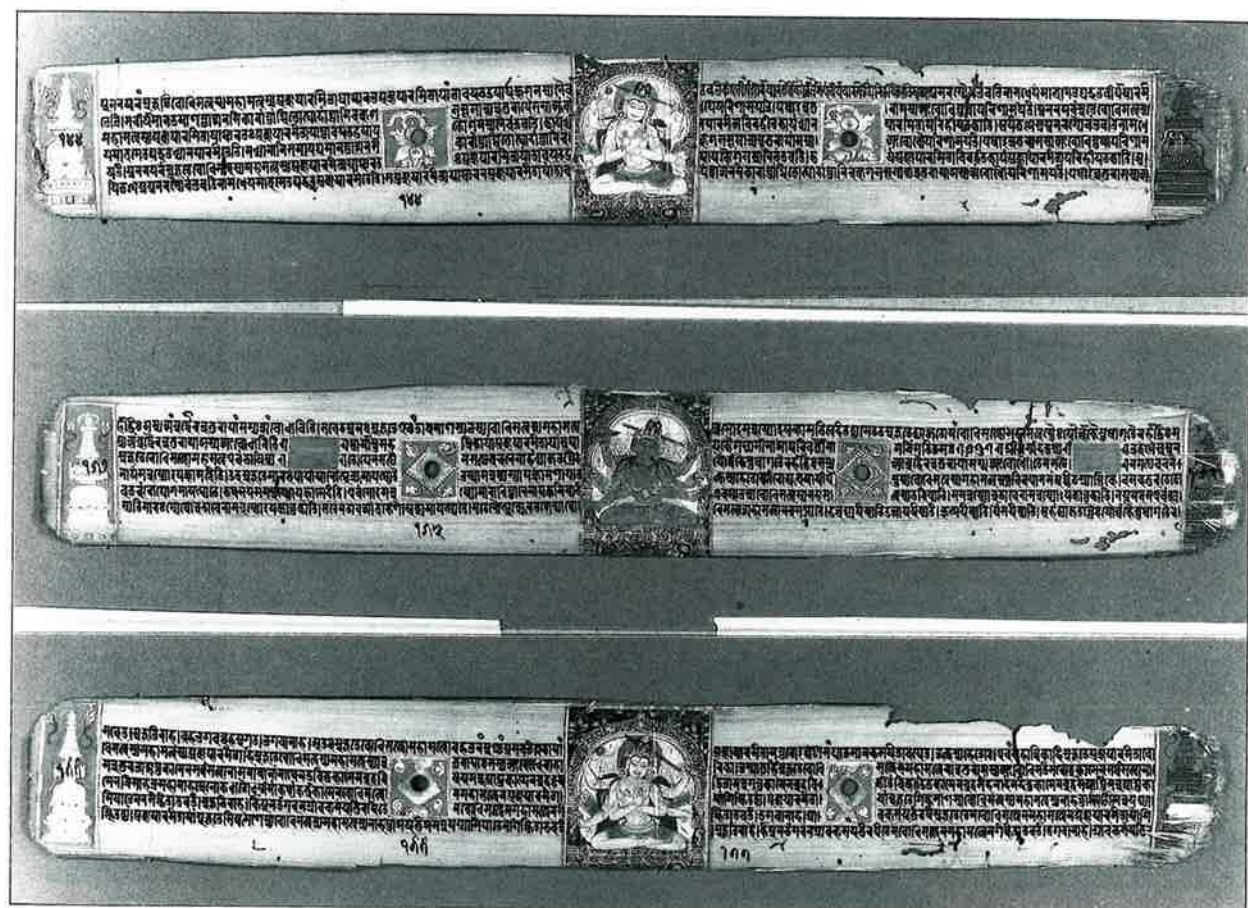


57.

Leaf from a Buddhist Manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*  
*Prajñāpāramitā* Text. Probably India, Bihar. Ca. 1105.

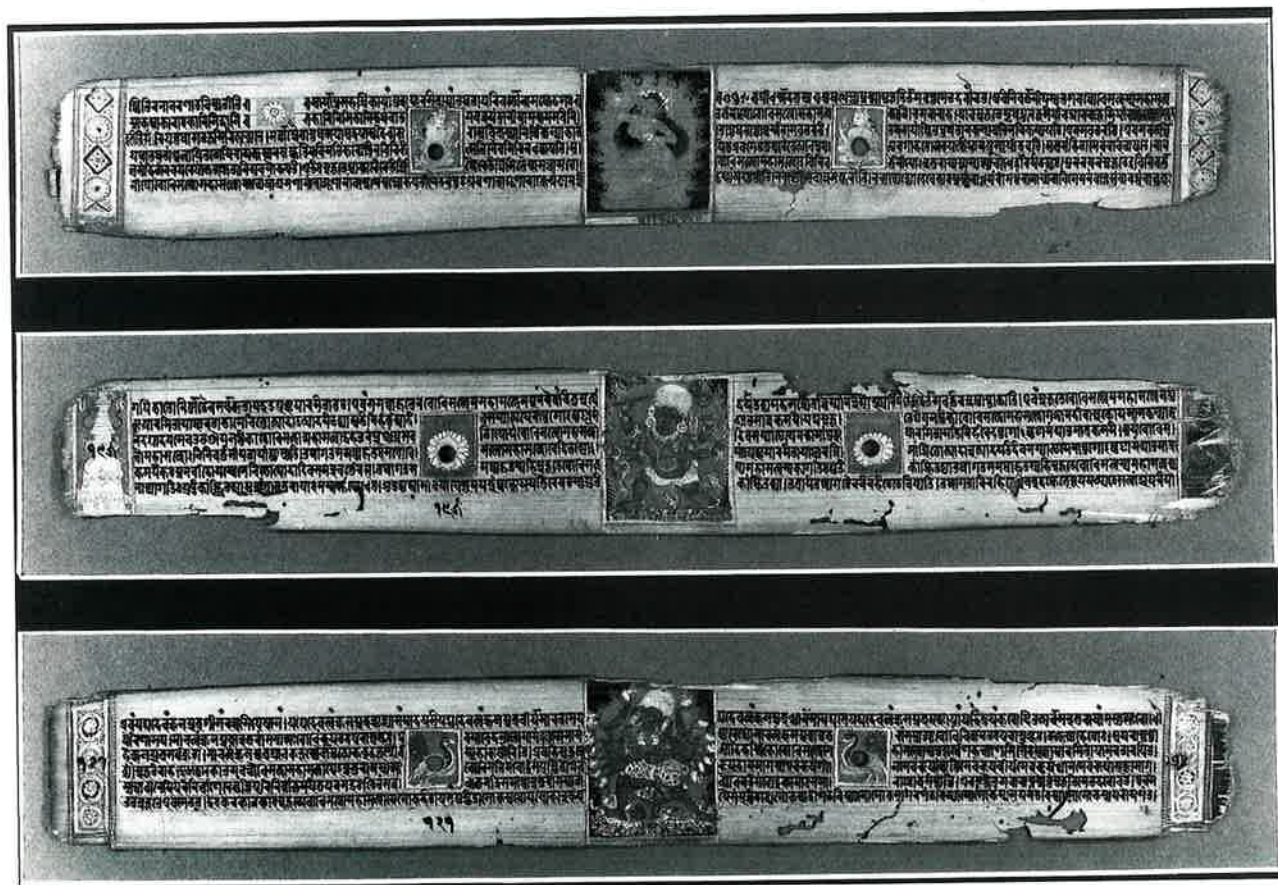


59.  
 Leaf from a Buddhist Manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*  
*Prajñāpāramitā* Text. Eastern India or Bangladesh. Ca.  
 twelfth century.



60a.  
Leaves from a Buddhist Manuscript. Top to bottom,  
folios showing: Vairocana, Amitāyus, Ratnasambhava.  
Eastern India or Bangladesh. Ca. twelfth century.





60b.

Leaves from a Buddhist Manuscript. Top to bottom, folios showing: Vajravārāhī, unidentified Dharmapāla, Hevajra. Eastern India or Bangladesh. Ca. twelfth century.



61.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra and  
Other Scenes. Myanmar (Burma), probably Pagan. Ca.  
eleventh or twelfth century.

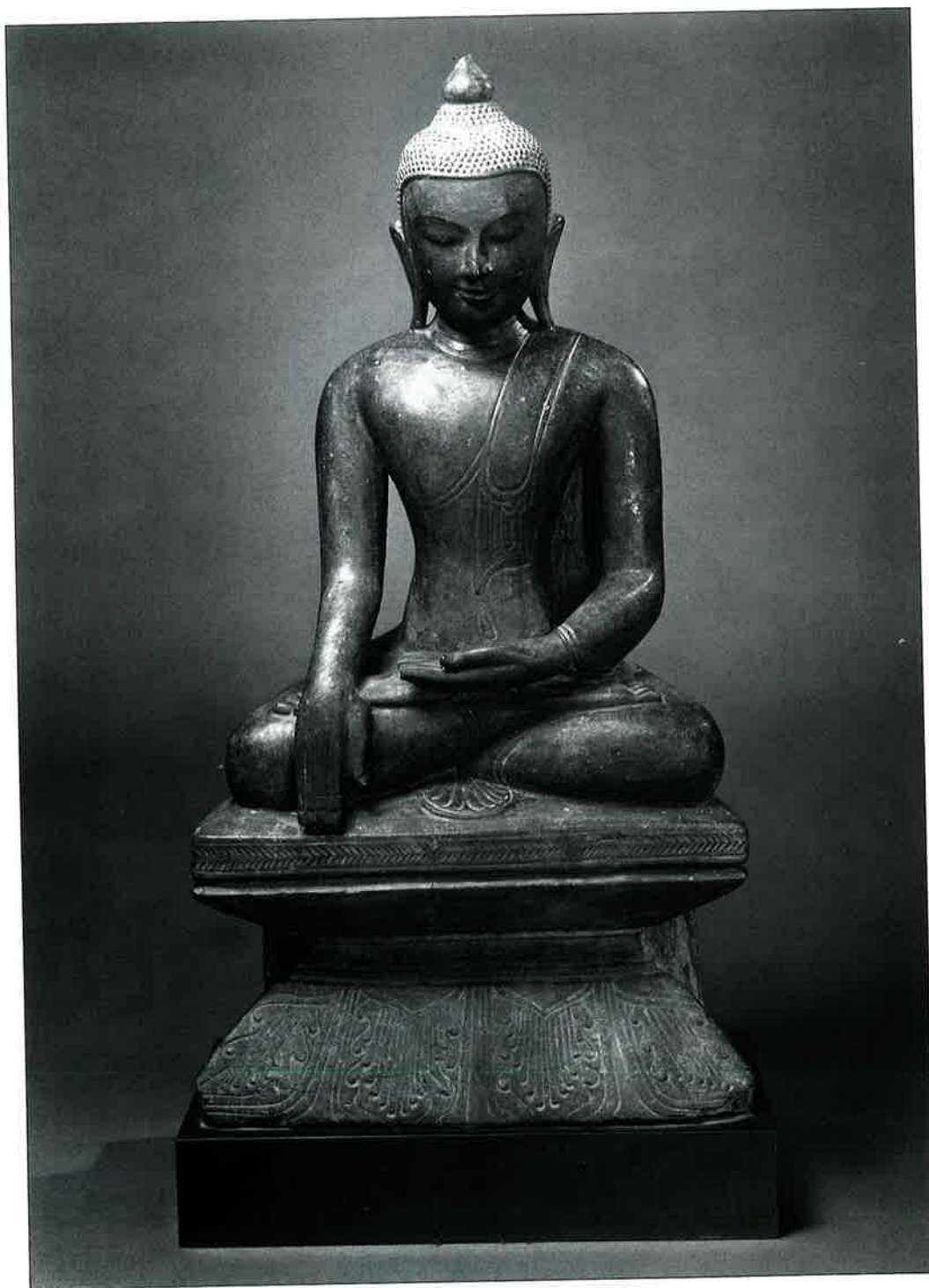


63.  
Buddha. Myanmar (Burma), probably Pagan. Ca.  
twelfth century.



64.  
Buddha. Myanmar (Burma). Ca. twelfth century.





65.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Myanmar (Burma). Ca. sixteenth century (?).



66.  
*Sāccha* with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Myanmar  
(Burma). Ca. eleventh century.

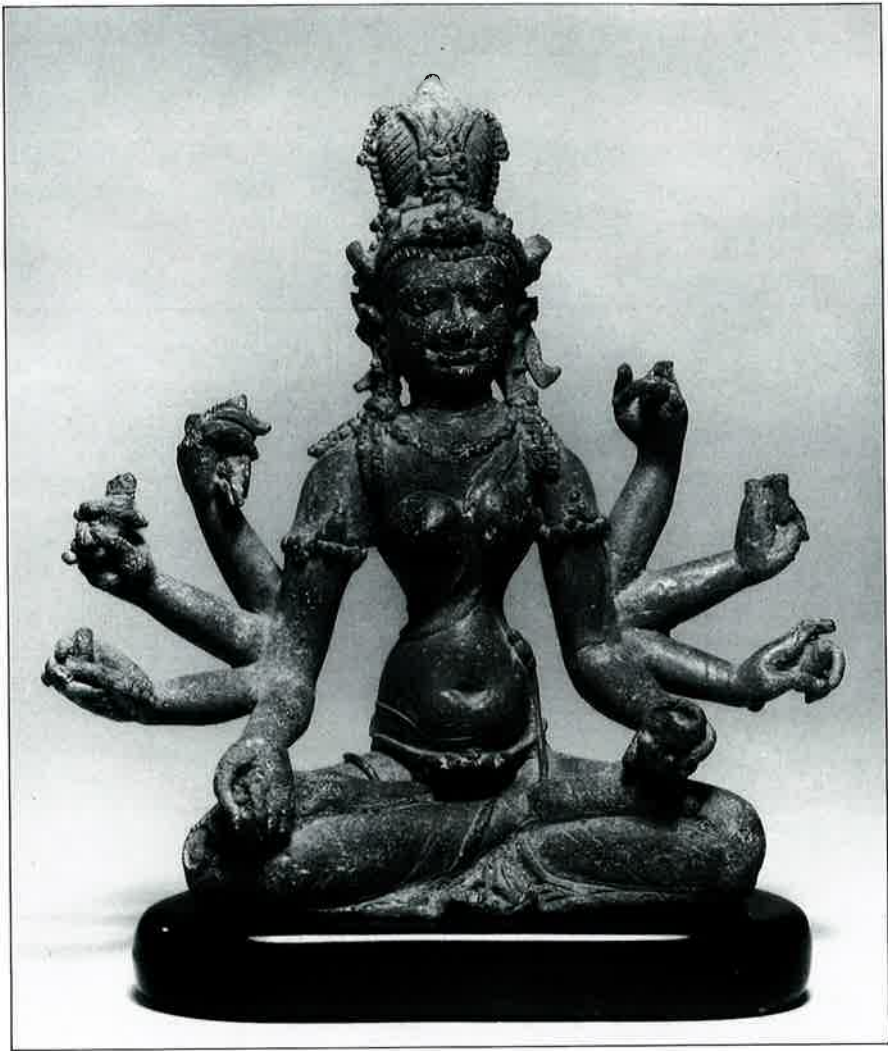


67.  
*Sāccha* with Three Buddhas in Architectural Settings.  
Myanmar (Burma). Ca. eleventh century.

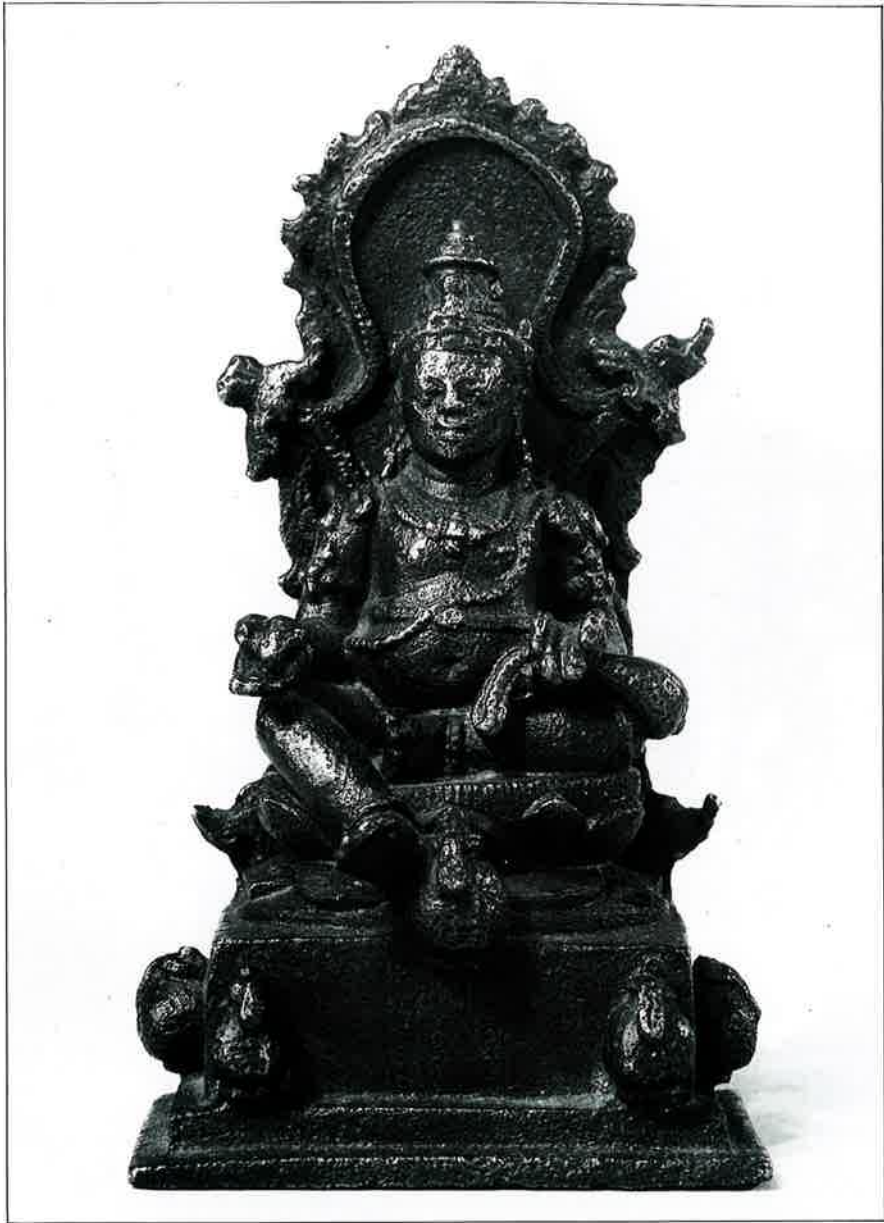


69.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Northern Thailand. Ca. late fifteenth or early sixteenth  
century.





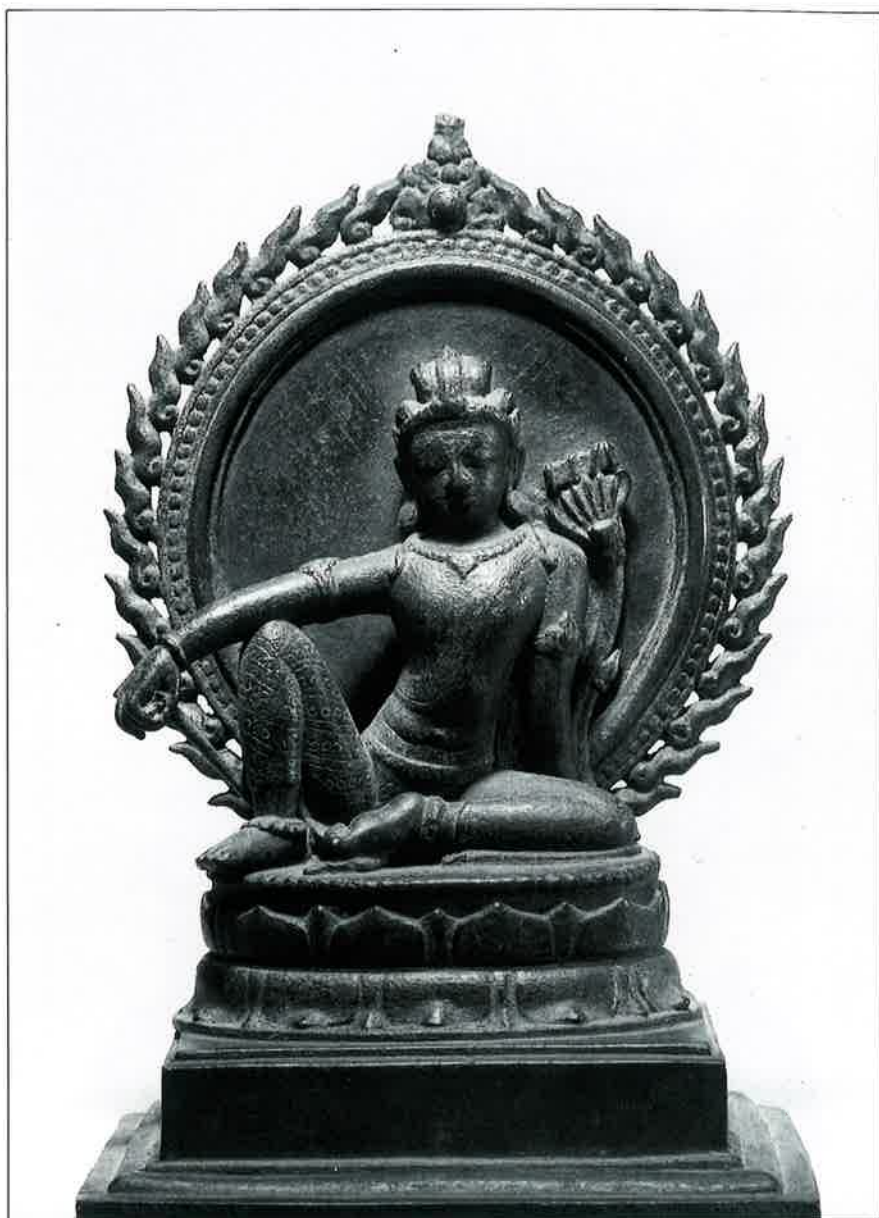
70.  
A Buddhist Goddess. Indonesia, Java. Ca. eighth  
century.



71.  
Jambhala or Kubera. Indonesia, Java. Ca. ninth  
century.



72. Buddha (probably Maitreya). Indonesia, Java.  
Ca. ninth century.

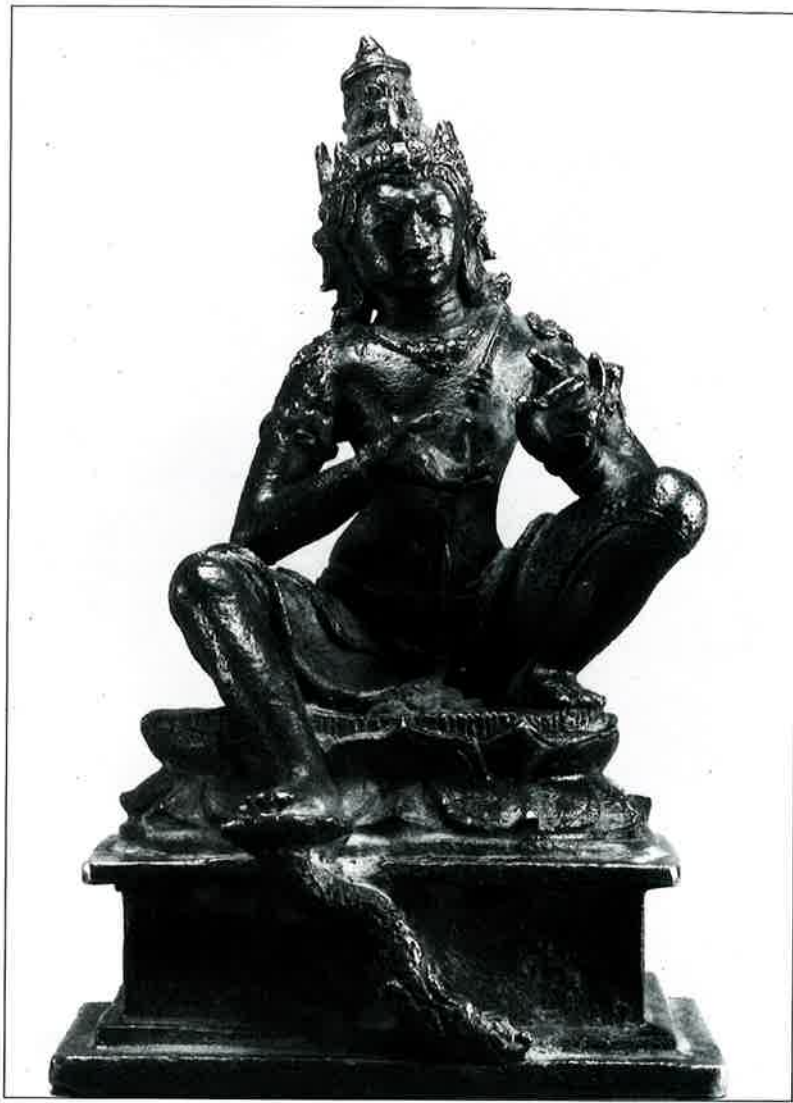


73.  
Mañjuśrī. Indonesia, Java. Ca. ninth century.





74.  
Mañjuśrī (Sita Mañjughoṣa). Reportedly found in  
Thailand, but probably made in Indonesia, Java. Ca.  
ninth century.



75.  
A Bodhisattva. Indonesia, Java. Ca. ninth century.

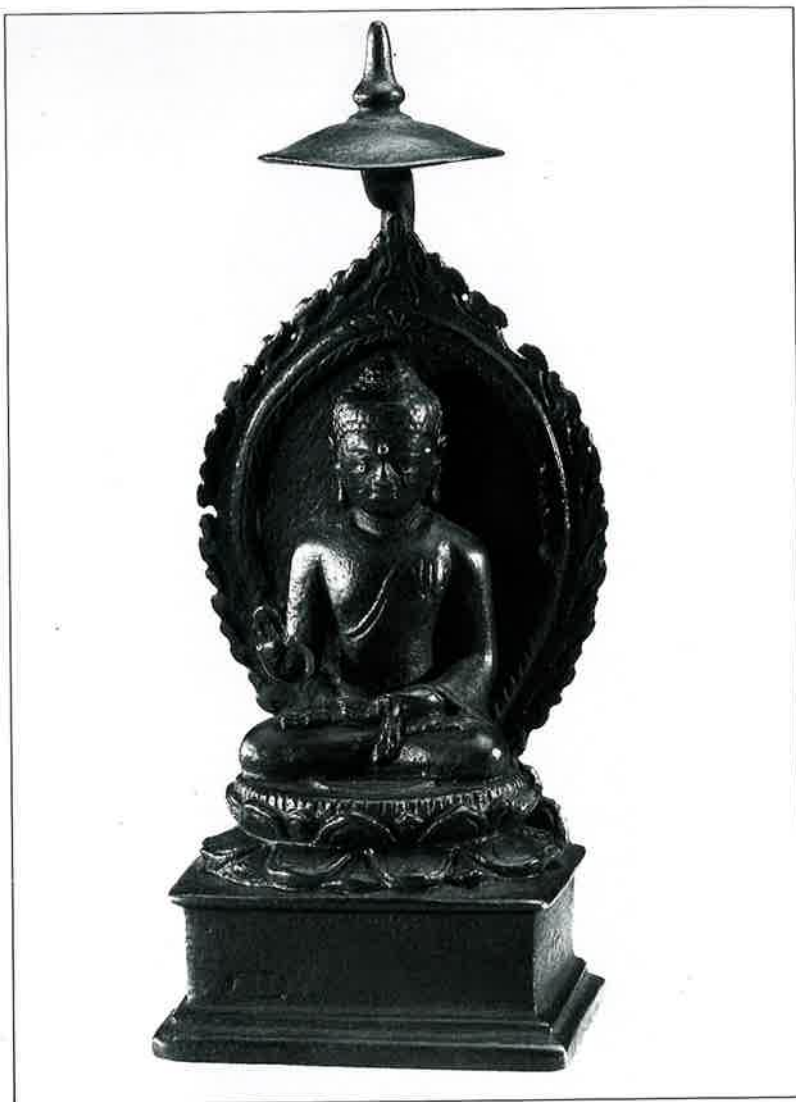


76.  
Gaṇeśa. Indonesia, Java. Ca. ninth century.



77.  
Śiva. Indonesia, Java. Ca. ninth century.





78.  
Buddha Amoghasiddhi. Indonesia, Java. Ca. ninth  
century.



79.

Tārā (?). Indonesia, Java. Ca. late ninth or tenth century.



80.  
Avalokiteśvara. Reportedly found in peninsular  
Thailand, but perhaps from Indonesia, Java (?). Ca.  
tenth century (?).

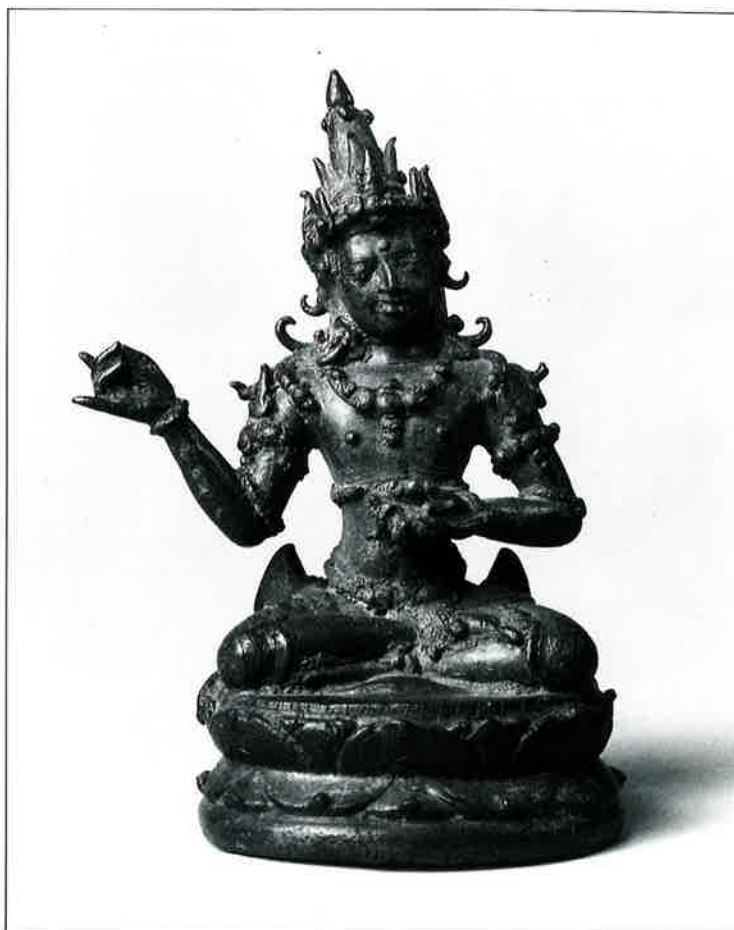


81.  
A Bodhisattva, possibly Vajrapāṇi. Indonesia, Java.  
Ca. tenth century.





82.  
Mahāvairocana. Indonesia, Java. Ca. tenth century.



83a.

*Vajra Deity from a Buddhist Maṇḍala.* Indonesia,  
probably eastern Java, Caṇḍi Reja, Nganjuk District.  
Ca. late tenth or eleventh century.



83b.

*Vajra Deity from a Buddhist Maṇḍala.* Indonesia,  
probably eastern Java, Caṇḍi Reja, Nganjuk District.  
Ca. late tenth or eleventh century.



83c.

*Vajra* Deity from a Buddhist *Maṇḍala*. Indonesia, probably eastern Java, Caṇḍi Reja, Nganjuk District. Ca. late tenth or eleventh century.





84.  
Mahāvairocana and Prajñāpāramitā. Indonesia, Java.  
Ca. late tenth or eleventh century.



85.  
Vajrasattva. Indonesia, Java. Ca. late tenth or eleventh  
century.



86.  
Avalokiteśvara. Indonesia, Java. Ca. eleventh century.

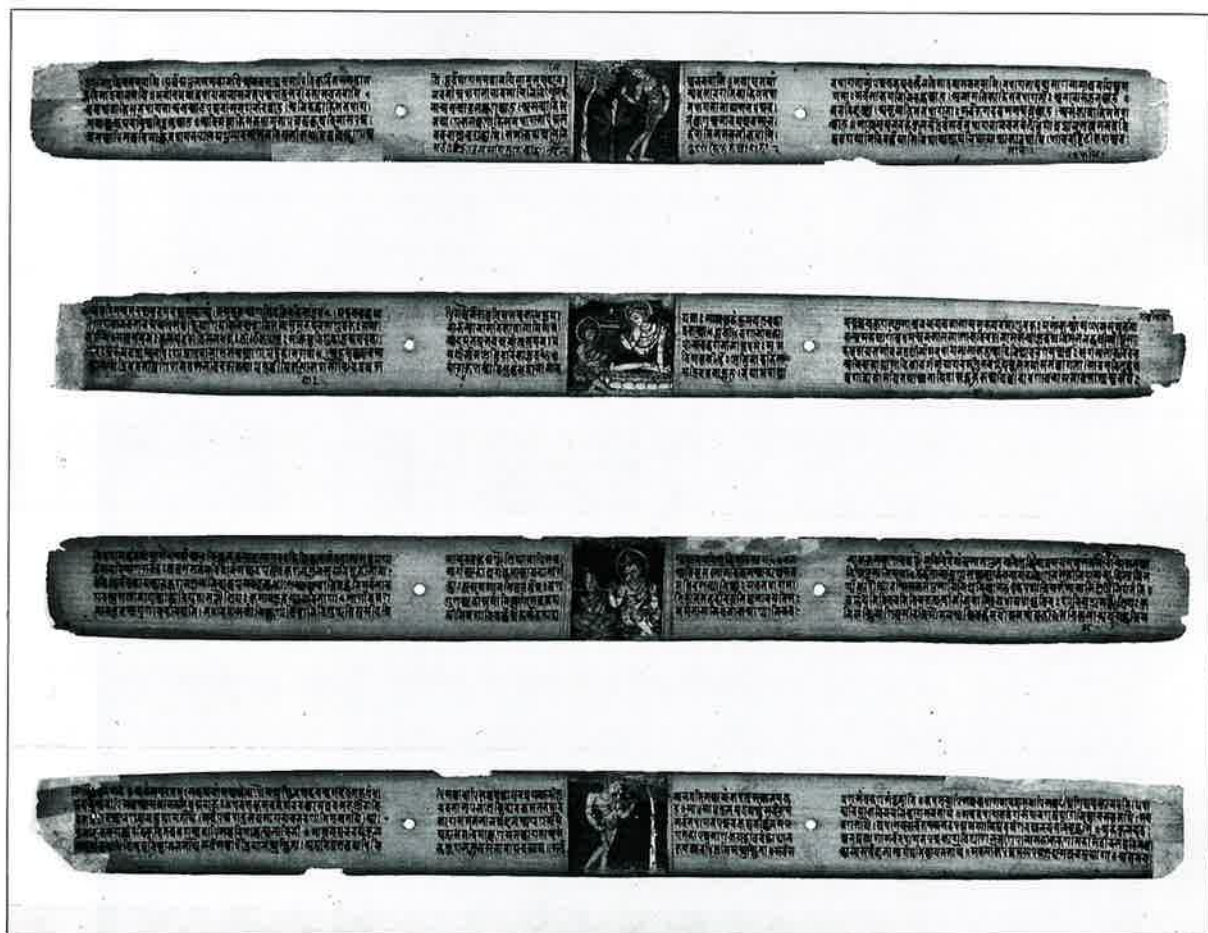


87.  
Mahābala. Indonesia, Java. Ca. eleventh or twelfth  
century.





88.  
"True Body of Avalokiteśvara." China, Yunnan region.  
Ca. eleventh or twelfth century (?).



89.

Leaves from a Manuscript of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* Text.  
Nepal, Kathmandu Valley. Ca. eleventh century.





93.  
 Fragment of a Sketchbook in the *Thyāsaphu* Format.  
 Top, side 1; bottom, side 2. By a Nepali artist in Tibet.  
 Ca. sixteenth century.



95.  
Khadiravaṇī Tārā. Nepal, Kathmandu Valley. Ca. late  
ninth or tenth century.





96.  
Śiva and Pārvatī. Nepal, Patan, Gahiti. Ca. eleventh  
century.



97.  
Viṣṇu on Garuḍa. Nepal, Kathmandu Valley, possibly  
Bhaktapur. Ca. sixteenth or seventeenth century.





98.  
Hari-Hara. Nepal. Ca. 1700.



99.  
Śiva and Pārvatī. Nepal, Kathmandu Valley. Ca. tenth  
century.





100.  
Avalokiteśvara. Nepal, Kathmandu Valley. Ca. ninth  
century.



101.  
Avalokiteśvara. Nepal, Kathmandu Valley. Ca. tenth  
or early eleventh century.



102.  
Mañjuśrī Kumāra. Nepal, Kathmandu Valley.  
Ca. ninth or tenth century.



103.  
Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara. Nepal, Kathmandu Valley.  
Ca. sixteenth or seventeenth century.





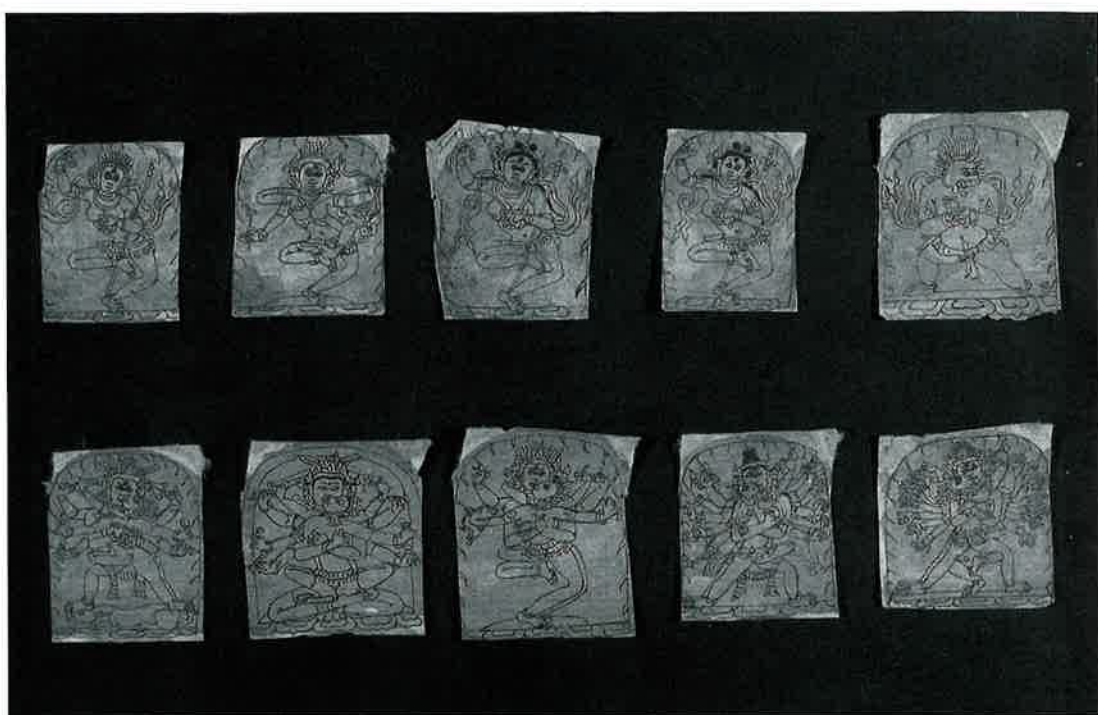


114a.  
 Consecration Pantheon from a Sa skya Metal Image.  
 Tibet. Ca. fourteenth century.



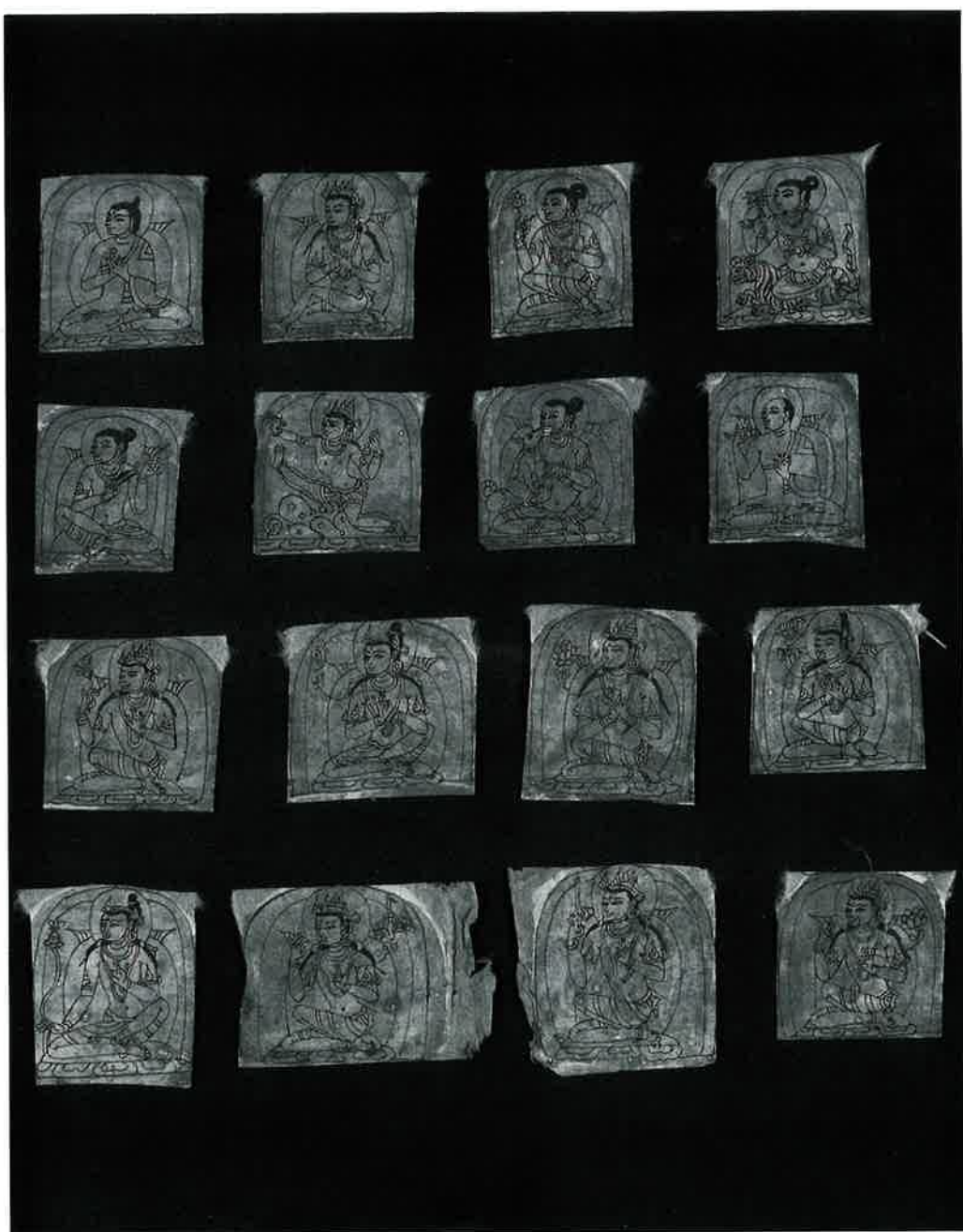
114b.

Consecration Pantheon from a Sa skya Metal Image.  
Tibet. Ca. fourteenth century.



114c.  
Consecration Pantheon from a Sa skya Metal Image.  
Tibet. Ca. fourteenth century.





114d.  
Consecration Pantheon from a Sa skya Metal Image.  
Tibet. Ca. fourteenth century.



126.

"The Assembly at Which the Bhāgavan Buddha  
Śākyamuni Taught [This *Sūtra*]." China, Suzhou.  
Dated 1306 under the Yuan dynasty.





127.  
Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century.



128.  
Sita Tārā. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century.





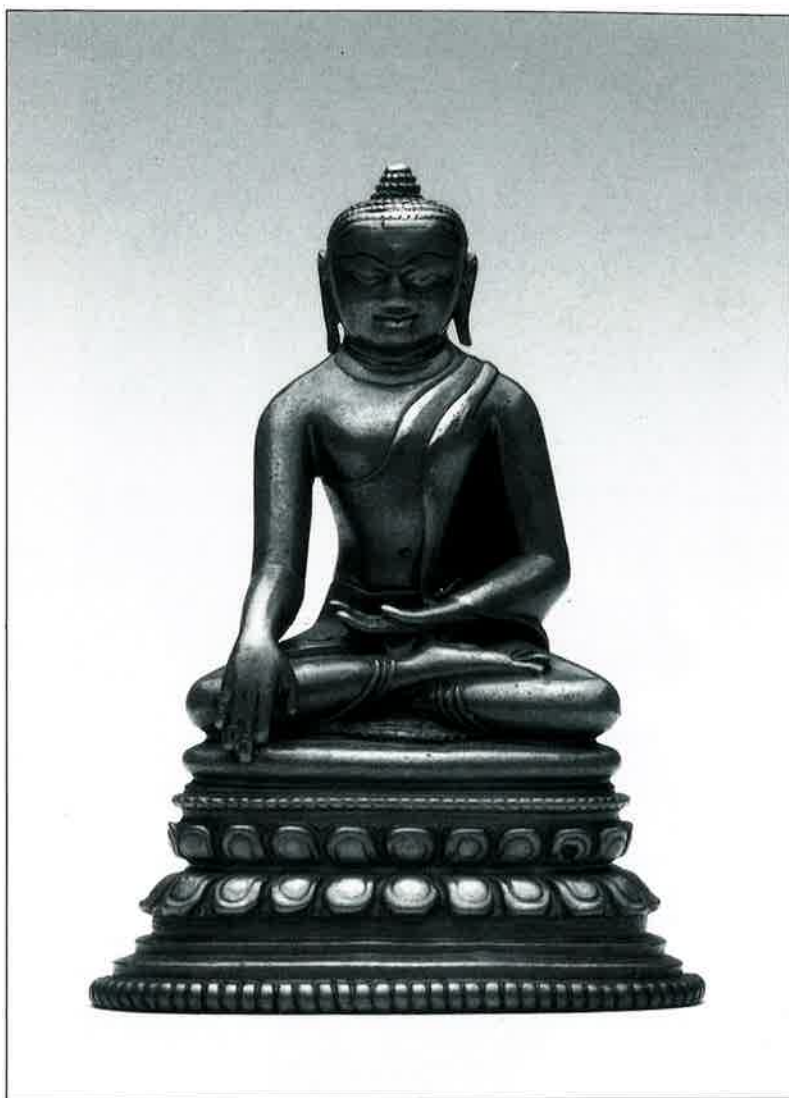
130.  
Vajravārāhī. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century.



131.  
Piṭa Jambhala. Tibet. Ca. twelfth or thirteenth century.

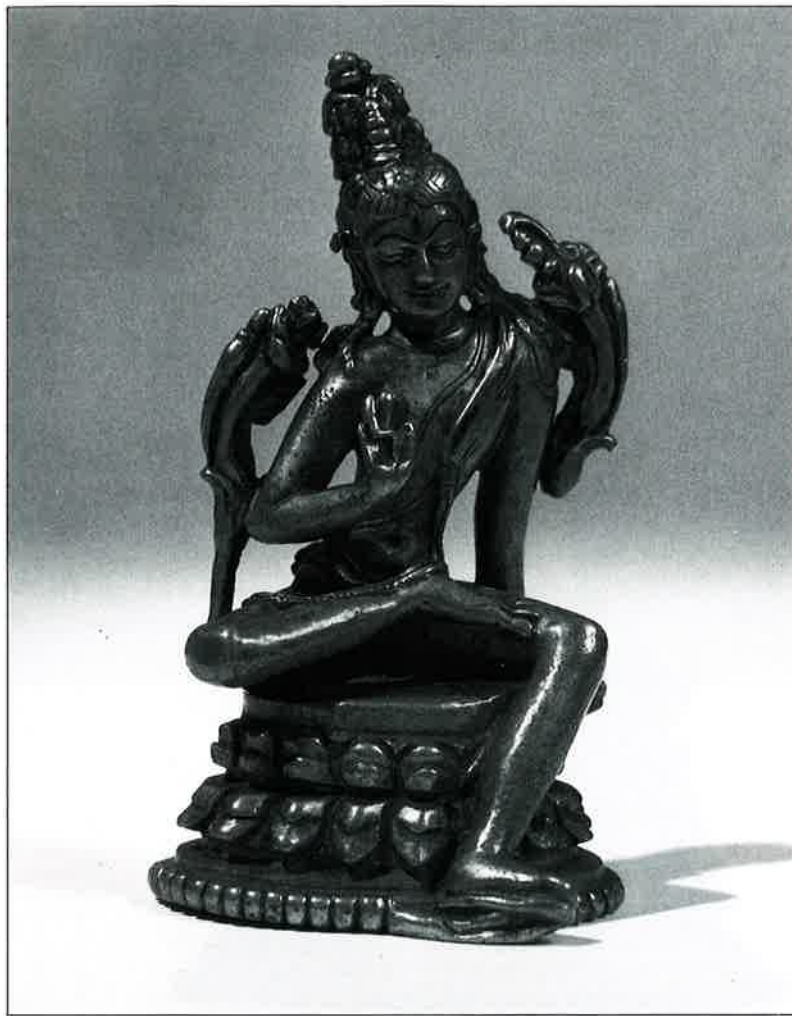


132.  
Book Cover. Tibet, Mang 'khar, western gTsang  
District. Ca. first quarter thirteenth century.



133.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Tibet. Ca. late eleventh or early twelfth century.





134.  
Maitreya. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century.



136.  
Mañjuśrī. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century.

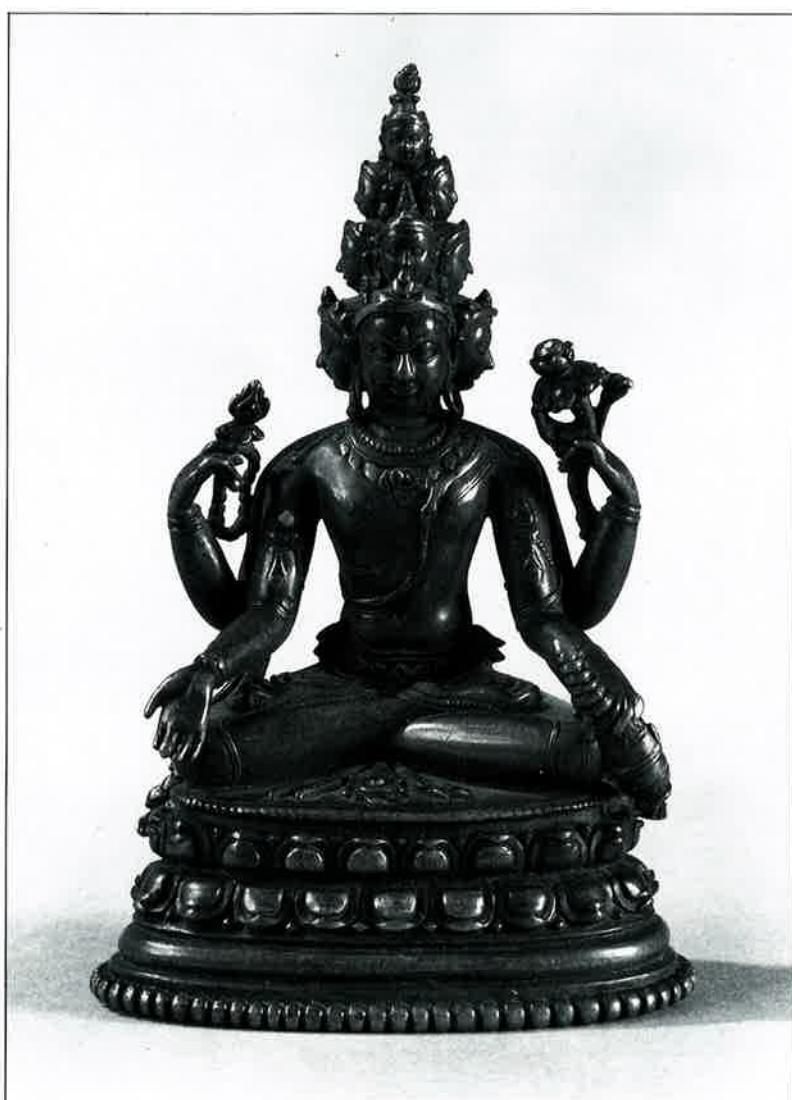


137.  
Unidentified Attendant Bodhisattva. Tibet. Ca. twelfth  
or early thirteenth century.



138.  
Mañjuśrī. Tibet. Ca. twelfth century.





139.  
Ekadaśamukha Avalokiteśvara. Tibet. Ca. twelfth  
century.



140.  
"Mahākāla Nāgarāja" (?). Tibet. Ca. eleventh or twelfth  
century (?).



141.  
Mahāvairocana. Tibet, dBus District (?). Ca. twelfth or  
thirteenth century.



142.  
Avalokiteśvara. Tibet, dBus District (?). Ca. twelfth or  
thirteenth century.





143.  
Avalokiteśvara. Tibet, gTsang District. Ca. fourteenth  
century.



144.  
Maitreya. Tibet, gTsang District. Ca. thirteenth  
century.



145.  
Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni Triumphant Over Māra.  
Tibet, gTsang District. Ca. thirteenth century.



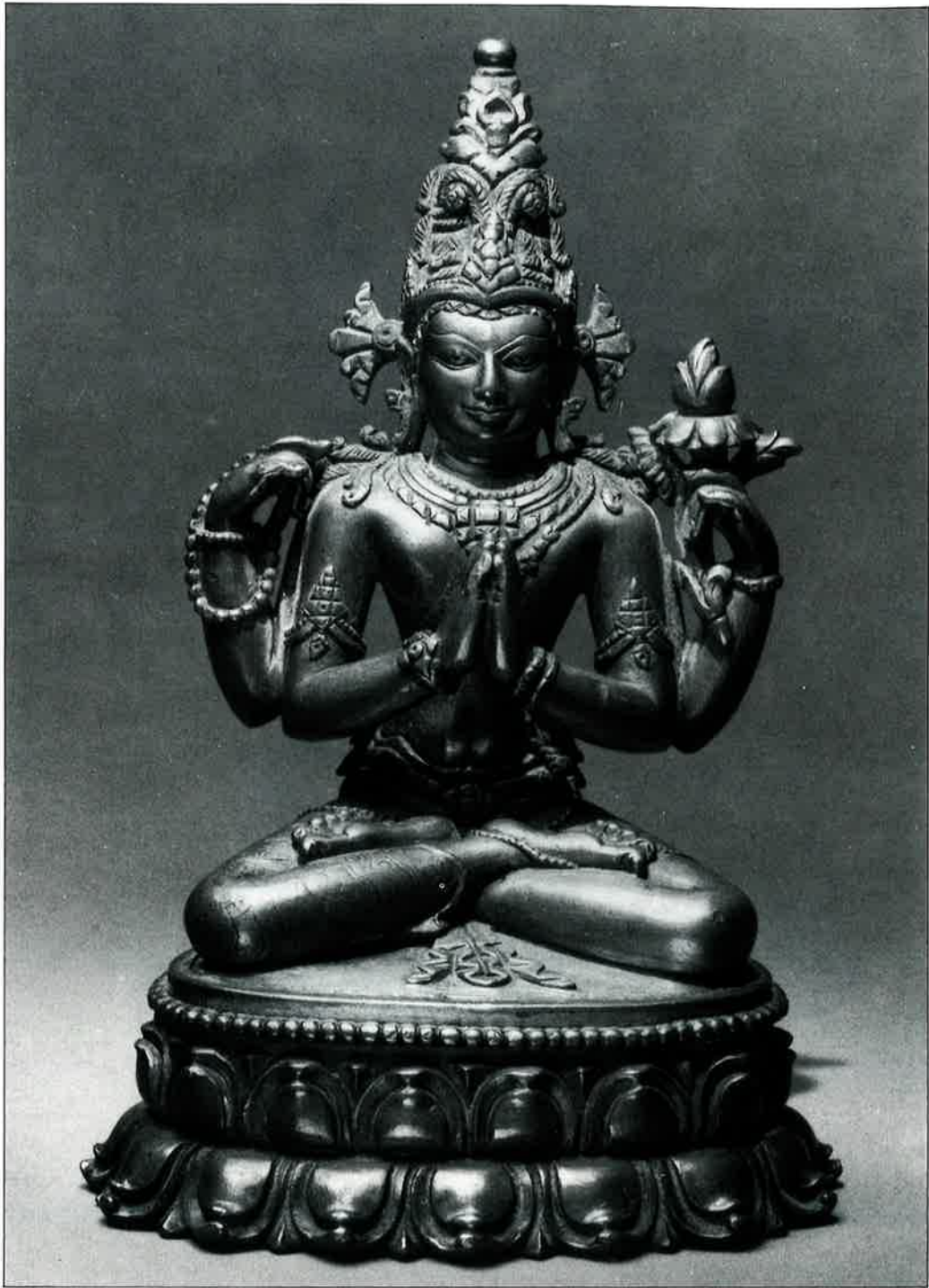


146.  
Sita Mañjughoṣa. Tibet, gTsang District. Ca. late  
thirteenth or fourteenth century.

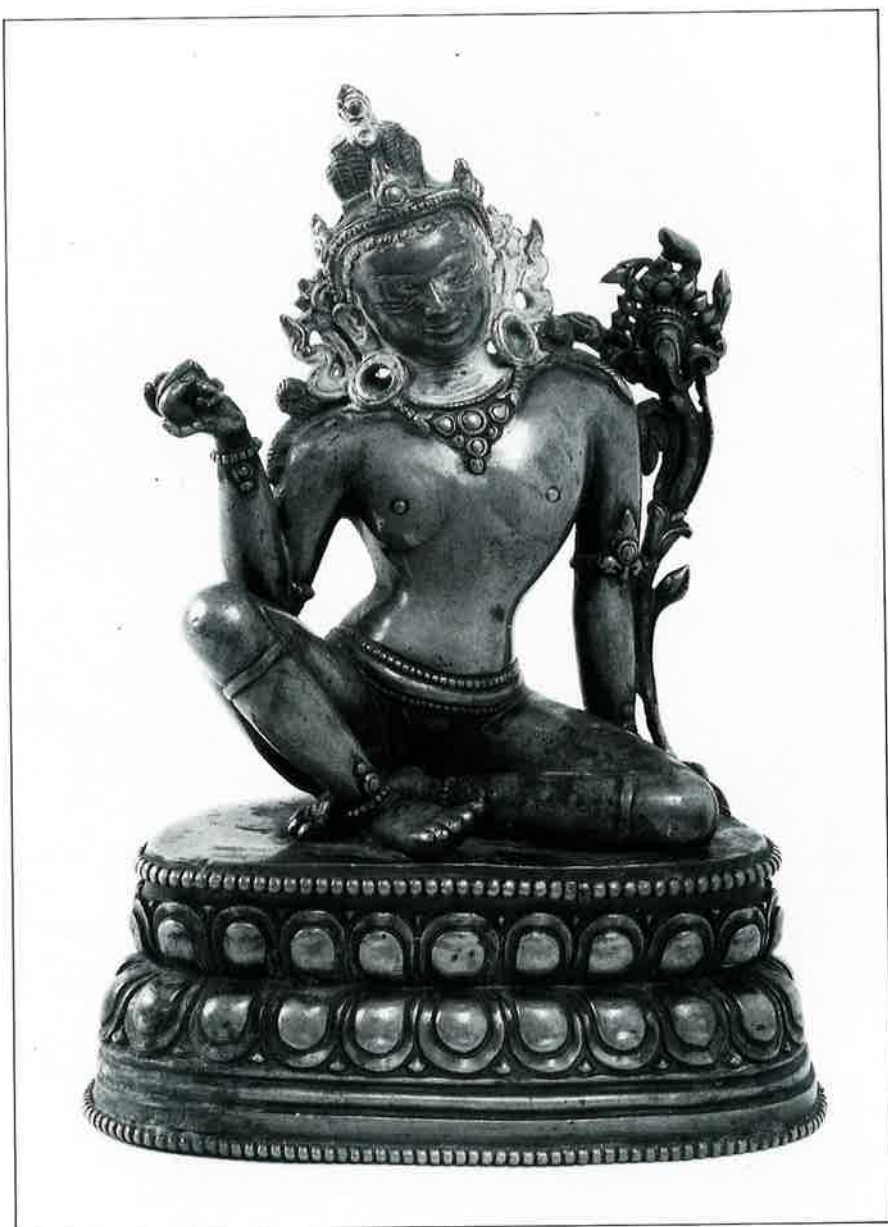




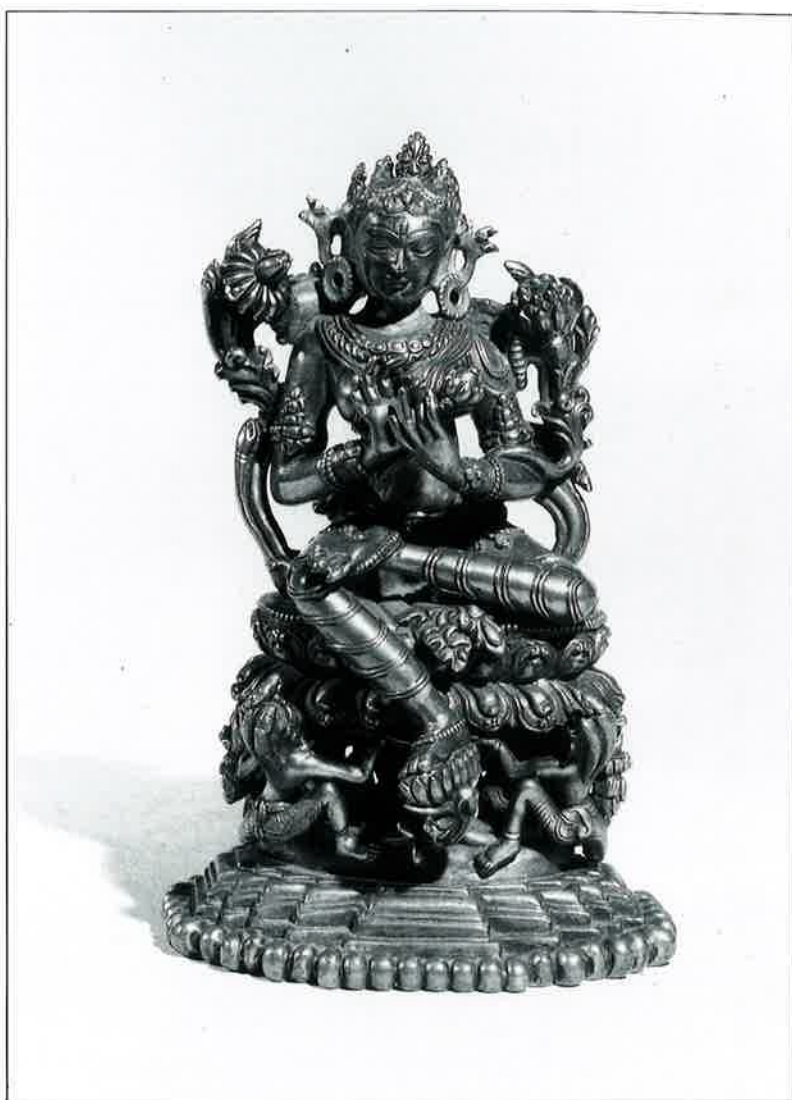
147.  
Sita Mañjughoṣa. Tibet, gTsang District. Ca. fourteenth  
century.



148.  
Śaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara. Tibet, gTsang District. Ca.  
fourteenth century.



149.  
Vajrapāṇi. Tibet. Ca. thirteenth century.



150.  
Mahāśrī Tārā. Tibet, gTsang District. Ca. thirteenth  
century.





151.  
Prajñāpāramitā or Mahāśrī Tārā (?). Tibet, gTsang  
District. Ca. thirteenth or early fourteenth century.



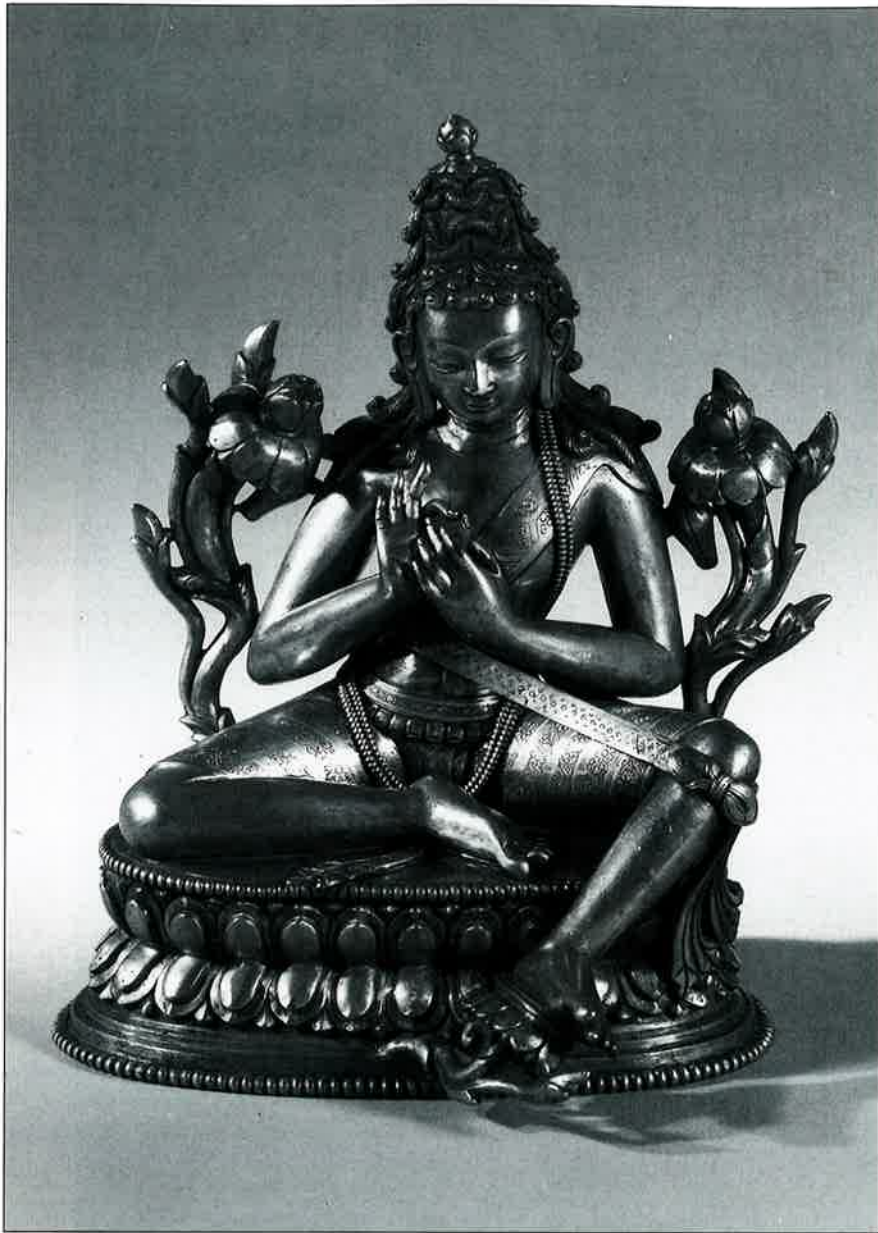
152.

Śyāma Tārā. Tibet, gTsang District. Ca. terminal  
thirteenth or fourteenth century.



153.

Hevajra. Tibet, gTsang District. Ca. fourteenth century.



154.  
Simhanāda Avalokiteśvara. Tibet. Ca. late thirteenth or  
fourteenth century.





158.  
Maitreya Bodhisattva. Tibet. Ca. sixteenth to  
eighteenth century (?).



160.  
The Mahāsiddha Virūpa. China. 1403-1425.



161.  
Avalokiteśvara. Northeastern China, either Beijing or  
Chengde. 1736-1795.

162.  
Mañjuśrī. Northeastern China, either Beijing or  
Chengde. 1736-1795.



163.  
Amitāyus. Northeastern China, either Beijing or  
Chengde. Ca. eighteenth century.





164.  
Unidentified Sash-Bearing Bodhisattva. China, possibly  
Dehua or Jingdezhen. Ca. fifteenth century.



165.

*Sāccha* of Amitāyus. China, Dehua. Ca. eighteenth century.

## EPILOGUE

After the Muslim conquest of Bihar and Bengal in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, the buildings that once had resonated with the devout activity of monks and lay worshippers stood neglected, accumulating the layers of earth that awaited the archaeologist's tool. A few inscriptional records and travellers' accounts reveal that a small number of Buddhists from other regions of Asia, such as Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka, and Tibet, continued to visit sites in the former Pāla kingdom. But with the destruction of the monasteries that are the foundation of a thriving Buddhist society, it no longer was possible to sustain Buddhism in its homeland. Hindu practices continued, although large scale patronage of works of art became virtually impossible under Muslim rule.

Over the last two centuries a remarkable series of transformations has taken place at many of the Pāla sites of eastern India. Today, visitors to many of the sites that flourished during the Pāla period will be struck by the number of monuments that have been restored and the thriving religious activity they inspire. Stimulated at first by the antiquarian interests of nineteenth-century intellectuals, the revitalization is the result of scientific, archaeological efforts as well as outpourings of religious devotion, many of which have their roots in the Pāla period transmission of Buddhism abroad.

The site of Bodh Gayā is the subject of a particularly interesting story. Lying abandoned after centuries of neglect, the village was happened upon by a wandering Śaivite ascetic in the late sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Attracted by its solitude and peacefulness, he made Bodh Gayā his home, founding a small monastic cloister (*maṭha*) for *brāhmaṇas*. Within a few generations, the Śaivite monastery, headed by an official known as a Mahant, had grown in wealth and importance. By the nineteenth century, the Mahant had become one of the richest landowners in Bihar. Although claiming ownership of the Buddhist remains at Bodh Gayā, the successive Mahants had done virtually nothing to preserve or revitalize the temple and sacred tree that lay within a few yards of their establishment.

In the early nineteenth century Bodh Gayā began to attract public notice, setting the stage for a legal dispute with the Mahant that was not resolved until 1949.<sup>2</sup>

Beginning in 1810, Myanmar (Burmese) interest in Bodh Gayā was rekindled, and several Myanmar kings made overtures to the Government of India for help in restoring the site. Archaeologists and scholars with antiquarian interests also began to recognize the site's supreme importance.

Near the end of the nineteenth century, after the monuments of Bodh Gayā had lain neglected for some seven hundred years, Bodh Gayā's plight was dramatically and poignantly brought to public attention by a famous writer and friend of Buddhism, Sir Edwin Arnold, who visited Bodh Gayā and was struck by its ruinous condition.<sup>3</sup> Like countless visitors before him, he wished to have one of Bodh Gayā's prized mementos. But when he asked one of the local priests if he could have a leaf from the sacred *bodhi* tree, he was surprised at the priest's reply. "Pluck as many as ever you like, *sahib*," said the priest, "it is nought to us."<sup>4</sup>

"Ashamed of his indifference," Sir Edwin later wrote, "I took silently the three or four dark shining leaves which he pulled from the bough over his head, and carried them with me to Ceylon [Sri Lanka]. . . . There I found them prized by the Sinhalese Buddhists with eager and passionate emotion. The leaf presented by me to the temple at Kandy, for example, was placed in a casket of precious metal and made the centre of a weekly service."<sup>5</sup>

Inspired by the reverence with which the *bodhi* tree leaves were treated in Sri Lanka, Sir Edwin spearheaded a movement to restore Bodh Gayā in a manner befitting its status as one of the most important centers of the Buddhist world. His efforts stimulated others, most notably Anagārika Dharmapāla of Sri Lanka, and led to the foundation of the Mahābodhi Society, which dedicated itself to the renewal of Buddhist activity at the site. Comprised of representatives from the Buddhist nations of the world, including Tibet, Burma (now Myanmar), Japan, China, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Siam (now Thailand), India, and what is now Bangladesh, as well as the United States and France, the committee suggested the cosmopolitanism of Bodh Gayā during its heyday.

Sir Edwin was highly aware of the importance of Bodh Gayā to Buddhists throughout the world, and indeed one of his motives for reestablishing the site to its former

glory was to help endear the British to the millions of Asian Buddhists. What he might not have anticipated was that in the formation of the Mahābodhi Society with representatives from all over the Buddhist world, Bodh Gayā's former international glory was being replicated. Today monasteries in the architectural styles of many Buddhist countries have been built in the vicinity of the Mahābodhi Temple and the sacred *bodhi* tree, and representatives of these many cultures actively practice their religion at the site.<sup>6</sup>

The postscript to this story is still being written, for it is not only Bodh Gayā that has been transformed. Other Buddhist holy sites in eastern India also are being restored. Much of the development is the result of efforts made by agencies within India, including the Archaeological Survey of India and the Department of Tourism. But this revitalization has not come from within India alone. Buddhists from throughout Asia, including some of the very regions that once had been nourished by the Pāla traditions, have come back to India to pay homage and revitalize the Buddhist homeland.

At Bodh Gayā in particular the Tibetans exiled from their homeland by the takeover of their country by the People's Republic of China have focused their attentions on the site that once had been the centerpiece of Pāla Buddhist imagery. Ceremonies are performed regularly at the Mahābodhi Temple, and pilgrims from all over the Buddhist world once again flock to the site to behold the spot where the great sage Śākyamuni meditated beneath

his *bodhi* tree. Workshops are once more producing small images to be carried home as mementos, and dark, shining leaves from the *bodhi* tree are again being carried away, safeguarded in pockets, books, scraps of cloth, and other makeshift presses. Today, the main image in the Mahābodhi Temple, perhaps the very one that served as a model for so many others outside of India, is once more bedecked with silken robes, and the inner chamber of the temple is once more aglow with lamps and offering candles.

Little was it known at the time the gift of Pāla culture was given to the other cultures of Asia that the debt would one day be repaid.

SLH

1. For this account see Dipak K. Barua, *Buddha Gaya Temple: Its History*, 2nd ed. (Buddha Gaya: Buddha Gaya Temple Management Committee, 1981), 72. Also see pp. 72-157 for a detailed narrative of the history of Bodh Gayā up to recent times. This book is the most thorough and informative publication about the recent history of the site of Bodh Gayā.
2. For an account of the legal dispute, see Alan Michael Trevithick, *A Jerusalem of the Buddhists in British India: 1874-1949* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1988). I am grateful to Miranda Shaw for providing this reference.
3. For information on Sir Edwin Arnold, see William Peiris, *Edwin Arnold: Brief Account of his Life and Contribution to Buddhism* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1970).
4. Barua, *Buddha Gaya Temple: Its History*, 278.
5. Barua, *Buddha Gaya Temple: Its History*, 278.
6. The legal status of Bodh Gayā remained clouded until 1949 when, in spite of the Mahant's claim of ownership, the government of Bihar passed an act that transferred control of the site to a Temple Management Committee. The Temple Management Committee remains in charge of the site today.



# APPENDIX I : THE EIGHT GREAT ILLUSORY DISPLAYS (AṢṬAMAHĀPRĀTIHĀRYA) ACCORDING TO A CHINESE TEXT

While Pāla period iconography is a very diverse and richly complex communicative system, one theme stands out above all others—the life of Śākyamuni Buddha as summarized by eight major events. Sculpted and painted representations showing all eight or fewer of the scenes constitute a significant proportion of the subject matter of the corpus of extant Pāla art. Based on the Pāla model, the theme and its variants became highly popular in other regions of Asia. It is likely that the theme had special significance in the Pāla lands, which contained many of the important sites at which these events took place.

Two very brief texts on the theme have been preserved in the Chinese canon. One of these is simply a collection of *dhāraṇīs*, invocation formulae that are mainly of interest to the practitioner who wishes to recite them.<sup>1</sup> However, the other text (translated below) describes the events and their symbolism and explains the practice behind the eight scenes.<sup>2</sup> Although neither text explains the complicated and rich historical developments associated with a cult of the eight major Buddha life events, they suggest one way in which the iconography was incorporated into Buddhist religious practice.

Briefly, the scenes reiterate the major events in the life of Śākyamuni Buddha. These are: 1) the birth to Queen Māyādevī at the Lumbinī garden (now in Nepal); 2) the Buddha-to-be's defeat of Māra (Māravijaya) and his subsequent enlightenment under the *aśvattha* tree at the *bodhimaṇḍa* in Bodh Gayā; 3) the first sermon, or setting the wheel of the Dharma in motion (*dharmacakra pravartana*) at the Deer Park (Rṣipatana Mṛgadāva) at Sārnāth near modern Vārāṇasī; 4) the "great illusion" (*mahāprātihārya*), or "illusion of the twins" (*yamakaprātihārya*), at the Jetavana monastery outside of Śrāvastī; 5) the descent from the Trāyastriṃśa heaven (*devaroḥaṇa*) near Sāmkāśya; 6) the taming of the wild elephant Nālāgiri at Rājagṛha when the Buddha's cousin Devadatta attempted to kill Śākyamuni; 7) the gift of honey by the monkey at the Monkey's Pond in Vaiśālī; and finally 8) the *parinirvāṇa*, or death of the Buddha, at Kuśinagara. The eight sites apparently are not mentioned together in Buddhist literature prior to their occurrence as a group in relatively late texts that may themselves have been products of the early Pāla period.<sup>3</sup>

## BUDDHA TELLING THE NAME OF THE EIGHT GREAT MAGICAL POTENCY (AṢṬAMAHĀPRĀTIHĀRYA) STŪPAS<sup>4</sup>

At one time, Lokajyeṣṭha ("Best of the World," i.e., the Buddha) told his disciples:

"Today, I am going to praise the names of the eight magical potency *stūpas*. Listen to me carefully. I will tell you what the eight are. The first one, in Lumbinī Garden of Kapila[vastu] city, is the Buddha's birth place. The second one, under a *bodhi* tree beside the Nairāñjanā River,<sup>5</sup> is the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment. The third one, in Vārāṇasī city of the Kāśī kingdom, is the place where the Buddha turned the great Dharma-wheel. The fourth one, the Jetavana [monastery] of Śrāvastī kingdom, is where the Buddha showed his great spiritual transcendence. The fifth one, Chuan city (i.e., Sāmkāśya), is where the Buddha descended from Indra's heaven (Trāyastriṃśa). The sixth one, at Rājagṛha, is where Devadatta was destroyed and the *saṃgha* purified (i.e., the taming of the wild elephant Nālāgiri). The seventh one, at Vaiśālī, is where the Buddha announced his speedy *nirvāṇa* (i.e., the gift of honey). The eighth one, Kuśinagara, is where the Buddha entered *nirvāṇa*. These are the eight great magical potency *stūpas*."

He then recited a *gāthā*:

"At King Suddhodana's capital in Kapila,  
Buddha was born in Lumbinī Garden;  
At Magadha near the Nairāñjanā River,  
He attained enlightenment under the *bodhi*  
tree;

In Vārāṇasī city of Kāśī kingdom,  
He turned the Dharma-wheel and explained  
the twelve times [of life];

At the Jetavana [monastery] of the great city  
of Śrāvastī,

He demonstrated his spiritual transcendence  
in the three worlds;<sup>6</sup>

At Chuan city in Sāmkāśya country,<sup>7</sup>

He descended from Indra's heaven;

In the monk's section of the great city of

Rājagṛha,

The Tathāgata transformed [the wild elephant] and showed his compassion and pity;

At the magical potency *stūpa* of Vaiśālī,  
The Tathāgata declared his eternity;  
At Kuśinagara's great power place,  
He entered *nirvāṇa*.

These are the eight great magical potency *stūpas*. If there are *brāhmaṇas*, good men and good women, who have a great mind to establish a *stūpa* or offer a temple [commemorating these places], these persons will gain great merit, great retribution, and great praise. Their reputation will spread widely. You disciples should learn from them. Also, disciples, if the good men and good women can offer the eight great magical potency *stūpas* sincerely, they will go to the heavenly realm after their death."

Lokajyeṣṭha then told his disciples, "Listen to my *gāthā* to know where the Buddha travelled and lived:

Twenty-nine years he lived in the royal palace,  
Six years in the snowy mountains he cultivated his mind,  
Five years at Rājagṛha he converted and saved people,  
Four years he stayed in the Vis-a[?] woods,  
Two years he lived at 'Ja-li-yen' [?],  
Twenty-three years he stayed at Śrāvastī,  
At Vaiśālī, [at] the Deer Park,  
[At] "Ma-ju-li" [?], [in] Indra's heaven,  
[At] Kuśinagara, [at] Kauśāmbī,  
On the summit of Stūpa Mountain,  
With the Wei-nu [?] tribe,  
And [in] King Suddhodana's capital of Kapilavastu—  
He stayed [in each] of these places for one year.<sup>8</sup>

Śākya Tathāgata then stopped travelling,  
Śākya's eighty years had ceased,  
He then entered *nirvāṇa*."

The *sūtra* of Buddha's telling of the names of the eight great magical potency *stūpas* [has ended].<sup>9</sup>

The *sūtra* is typical of late exegetical texts that have attained the status of *sūtra*, i.e., the words, or authoritative teachings, of the Buddha. Thus, the character of the text can be presumed to be that of explaining an existing phenomenon rather than an attempt to introduce and establish a new concept or practice.

Structurally the text seems to be a compilation of three elements: 1) a prose explanation of the sites, 2) the

*gāthā* (verse) form reiteration of the same information, and 3) a separate *gāthā* recounting the life of Śākyamuni. *Gāthas* have the virtue of being poetic and are therefore easier to remember than prose. Thus, the two *gāthā* portions of the text may have had a long existence prior to their incorporation into the text and their ultimate translation into Chinese. However, no date can be assigned to the presumed origin of any portion of the text; all that can be said is that it, or substantial portions of it, must have existed in Sanskrit prior to its translation into Chinese in 989-999. This is precisely the time when the cult of the *aṣṭamahāprātihārya* was at its height in the Pāla realm, and it is reasonable to assume that this text gives an accurate, albeit extremely terse, exposition of some of the underlying principles of the cult.

The most important point in the *sūtra* is the promise of rebirth in a heaven world in the passage: "If there are *brāhmaṇas*, good men and good women, who have a great mind to establish a *stūpa* or offer a temple [commemorating these places], these persons will gain great merit, great retribution, and great praise. Their reputation will spread widely. You disciples should learn from them. Also, disciples, if the good men and good women can offer the eight great magical power *stūpas* sincerely, they will go to the heavenly realm after their death." This undoubtedly accounts for some of the popularity of the practice and the dedication of numerous images of the subject that are found in India and abroad. The images are the product of offerings by the lay faithful who aspire to a paradisaal rebirth after this life.<sup>10</sup>

The Buddhists hold that there are many paradisaal realms, and it is possibly significant that no particular one is mentioned in the text as the goal of the practice. Buddhist cosmology envisions twenty-eight heavens above Mount Meru. Four of these are important as lands of promised rebirth. They are the heaven of the Four Great Kings (Caturmahārājas); Tuṣita, the paradise of Maitreya Bodhisattva; Trāyastriṃśa (also known as the "Indra's heaven" and the "heaven of the thirty-three gods"); and the Brahmaloka. Other Buddha worlds that are important as perfect lands, or paradises, are Ketumatī (the paradise of Maitreya when in the future he quits Tuṣita and descends to earth as a Buddha), Sukhāvatī (the paradise of Amitābha Buddha), Abhirati (the paradise of Akṣobhya Buddha), Vaidūryavati (the paradise of Bhaiṣajyaguru-vaidūryaprabhāsa Buddha), Akaniṣṭha (the paradise of Vairocana), and Potola (the paradise of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara). There are many others, and virtually every major Buddhist deity may be said to preside over his or her heavenly world; indeed, in one sense the number of such worlds is virtually infinite.

From an early date there have been multiple heavens in Buddhist cosmology. For example, passages from the earliest layers of the Pāli canon expressly state that Buddhist

laity will go to the Trāyastriṃśa heaven of Indra, while Buddhist monks and nuns who attain a heaven world will attain the much higher Brahmaloḥa. Accordingly, it may be suggested that the "heavenly realm" phrase in the text is a generic reference to the heavenly worlds, and which one a person will attain will depend upon the vows and practices he or she has performed.

The group of scenes/events/places is rooted in the very ancient practice of pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy sites as first prescribed in the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta*, in which four sites—those of the birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and *parinirvāṇa*—are set forth as appropriate places of devotion. When the other four were added is not clear, but it seems that by the time of Aśoka (ca. 250 B.C.) all four of the sites in the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta* were well established as places of pilgrimage and several others (far more than just the eight of the *aṣṭamahāprātihārya*) had been added. Some of the eight sites are marked by Aśokan period pillars that survive to the present day.<sup>11</sup> Pilgrimages to the sites of some of the life events of Śākyamurī are illustrated in the reliefs at Bhārhut (ca. 80 B.C.) and Sāncī (ca. 25 B.C.), and it appears that there was a widespread practice of pilgrimage to the great *pīṭhas* ("seat," e.g., of a great teacher or holy personage) of Buddhism as early as there is any archaeological record.<sup>12</sup> Although the emphasis on the eight events may have a pre-Pāla origin, it was not until the Pāla period that there is clear evidence of a popular cult, in the sense of a devotional practice, or soteriological method, connected to them. The promise of lay devotees attaining heaven worlds seems to have given rise to the practice of making dozens of *stūpas* and temples, hundreds of miniature votive *stūpas*, and probably millions of *sāccha* as acts of

faith to achieve the promised rebirth in the heaven world.

JCH

1. *Taishō shinshu daizōkyō*, ed. Junjirō Takakusu and Kaikyoku Watanabe (Tokyo: Daizō shuppan kabushiki kaisha, 1924-1934), no. 1684, *Aṣṭamahāsthānacaityavadāna-stava*. I would substitute *prātihārya* for *sthāna* in the Sanskrit reconstruction. See note 4 below.
2. *Taishō*, no. 1685, *Aṣṭamahāsthānacaitya-stotra*. I would substitute *prātihārya* for *sthāna* in the Sanskrit reconstruction. See note 4 below.
3. For further discussion, see my "Pilgrimage as Image: the Cult of the Aṣṭamahāprātihārya," part 1, *Orientalism* 18, no. 4 (April 1987): 55-63; and part 2, *Orientalism* 18, no. 8 (Aug. 1987): 56-68.
4. *Taishō*, no. 1685, translated into Chinese by Faxien (Fa Hsien) between 989-999. Reading *ling* as "magician's power" and not as "holy place," which is redundant to "ta" and unnecessary. Accordingly, I read the title as "*Buddha spoken sūtra of the stūpas of the eight great magician's powers*." The key word here is "*ling*," which generally is translated as "spiritual" in English but always carries with it the possibility of supernatural power over the elements and divine intervention or even simple magic, i.e., in Sanskrit, "*prātihārya*."
5. The modern Phalgu River in central Bihar.
6. "Three worlds" refers to the realms of desire (*kāmadhātu*), form (*rūpadhātu*), and formlessness (*arūpadhātu*).
7. Chu-an (literally, "bent woman") apparently refers to the story of the nun Utpalā, who knelt before the Buddha at the time of his descent from Trāyastriṃśa and received her prediction of enlightenment. Normally the city is called Sāmkāśya without reference to a "country."
8. The total sum is seventy-eight years, plus one year as the birth year (counted from conception—the first year is in the womb and a child is "one year old" at birth), which makes a total of seventy-nine.
9. Based on a preliminary translation into English by Fang-I Su, I have edited extensively and in some cases revised the translation.
10. If the practice of pilgrimage to the eight sites can be shown to have existed early in the history of Indian Buddhism, this may indicate an Indic forerunner or analogue to the East Asian paradise/Pure Land beliefs.
11. There are pillars or remains of pillars at Lumbinī, Sārnāth, Bodh Gayā, Sāmkāśya, and Vaiśālī and records of one that has not been located at Kuśinagara.
12. See my series of articles, "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism," part 1 [Lumbinī and Bodhgayā], *Orientalism* 16, no. 11 (Nov. 1985): 46-61; part 2 [Rṣipatana Mrgadāva], *Orientalism* 17, no. 2 (Feb. 1986): 28-43; part 3 [Śrāvastī and Sāmkāśya], *Orientalism* 17 no. 3 (March 1986): 32-46; part 4, *Orientalism* 17, no. 7 (July 1986): 28-40; part 5 [Kuśinagara, Appendices and Notes], *Orientalism* 17, no. 9 (Sept. 1986): 46-58. See also my series on "Pilgrimage as Image."

## APPENDIX II : THE ICONOGRAPHY OF CAKRASAMVARA AND THE DEITIES OF HIS MAṆḌALA

This Appendix has been provided in order to make the point that there is a highly technical and profoundly philosophical symbolism to the complex deities envisioned by the Tantric Buddhists.<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, prior to any meditation or advanced initiation to meditation on these complex symbols, an aspirant must completely master in detail the interpretive information provided either in the text or the commentaries<sup>2</sup> about the deity. Even a quick perusal of the following should prove that nothing in the way of prurient interest gave rise to these complex symbols, but simply that by using one of humankind's most powerful drives, the iconographers attempted to communicate the highest tenets of their philosophy and soteriological methodology. Neither the details of the deities of the *maṇḍala* nor the process of the rituals proper have been provided. However, as will be obvious, the details of the symbolism of the main deities of the system suffice to demonstrate its complexity.

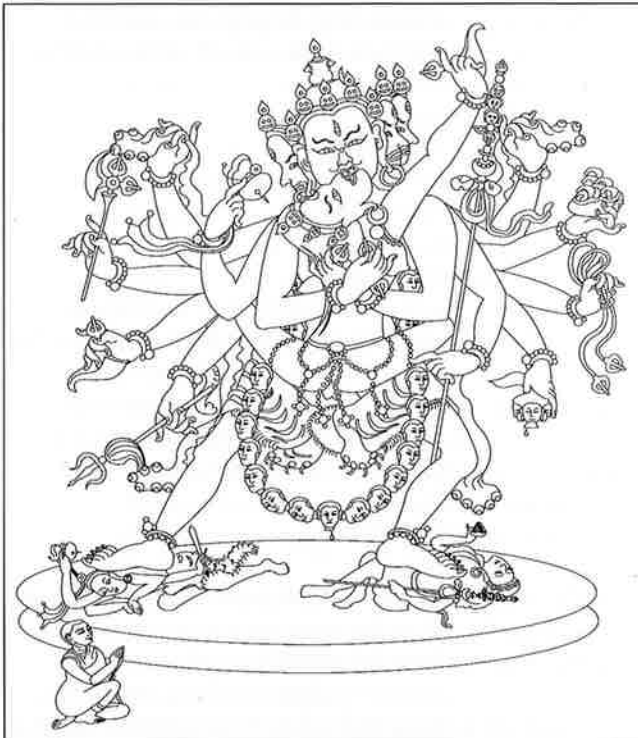


Figure 81. Iconographic drawing of Cakrasamvara.

To prepare, the practitioner must visualize himself (or herself) as Vajrasattva<sup>3</sup> and concentrate on the sounds of the *ḍamaru* (a small pellet drum made of the crania of two human skulls), which sounds the *mantras* of the twenty-four heros.<sup>4</sup> He then meditates on himself as the deity Cakrasamvara, who is described as the following (see also cat. nos. 92, 117, and fig. 81):<sup>5</sup>

### A. Cakrasamvara:

1. His four faces symbolize
  - a. four purified elements
    - 1) earth
    - 2) water
    - 3) fire
    - 4) air
  - b. four boundless wishes
    - 1) compassion
    - 2) love
    - 3) joy
    - 4) equanimity
  - c. four emancipations
    - 1) *bhāva* [form] *sūnyatā*
    - 2) *abhāva* [formless] *sūnyatā*
    - 3) *paramārtha* [highest truth] *sūnyatā*
    - 4) (The voidness that is all objectivity) *sūnya sūnyatā*?
  - d. four actions
    - 1) pacifying
    - 2) prospering
    - 3) overpowering
    - 4) destroying
  - e. colors of faces
 

front, blue [east]  
left, green [north]  
back, red [west]  
right, yellow [south]

(The colors correspond to those of the four directional Buddhas of the basic five Jina Buddha *maṇḍala*.)
2. body color is [dark] blue to symbolize that his wisdom is the *dharmadhātu jñāna* [= highest, ultimate enlightenment]



3. three eyes (one each face) symbolize
  - a. that he sees the three *lokas* (worlds)
    - 1) *kāmaloka* (sense-desire world), of which there are six *gatis* (realms of rebirth):
      - a) *naraka* (hell)
      - b) *preta* ("hungry ghosts")
      - c) animal
      - d) *nara* (human) existence
      - e) *asura* (demi-gods)
      - f) *devata* (gods)
    - 2) *rūpaloka* (form world)  
there are seventeen form realms, including heavenly realms, above the desire world
    - 3) *arūpaloka* (formless world)  
there are four formless states of existence beyond the desire and form worlds
  - b. that he knows the three times
    - 1) past
    - 2) present
    - 3) future
4. twelve arms symbolize
  - a. the evolution and the involution of the twelve *nīdanas* (i.e. the "twelfefold chain of causation")
    - 1) *avidyā* (ignorance)
    - 2) *saṃskāra* (tendency, volition)
    - 3) *viññāna* (consciousness, cognition)
    - 4) *nāmarūpa* (name and form)
    - 5) The six senses or the twelve *āyatana*s (sense-fields)
 

a) eye/sight	a <sub>1</sub> ) sight objects
b) ear/hearing	b <sub>1</sub> ) sound objects
c) nose/smell	c <sub>1</sub> ) smell objects
d) tongue/taste	d <sub>1</sub> ) taste objects
e) body/touch	e <sub>1</sub> ) touch objects
f) mind/thought	f <sub>1</sub> ) mind objects
    - 6) *sparsā* (touch, contact between sense faculty and sense object)
    - 7) *vedanā* (sensation)
    - 8) *tṛṣṇā* (desire, attachment, craving)
    - 9) *upādāna* (enjoyment, grasping)
    - 10) *bhava* ([coming into] existence, i.e., development of the embryo in the womb)
    - 11) *jāti* (birth)
    - 12) *jarā maraṇa* (old age and death)
  - b. that he knows the twelve "projections" (Tib. 'pho ba "transformations") = Skt. *saṃkrama*, *saṃkrānta*; "going, "coming together" [part of the yogic process undertaken by the practitioner]

1-12 [no list given]

5. his twelve hands (and their respective attributes) symbolize:
  - a & b. In his two principal hands he holds the *vajra* (right hand) and the *ghaṇṭā* (left hand), which symbolize that the enlightened mind has perfected compassion (the *vajra*) and realized emptiness (the *ghaṇṭā*, or bell). By embracing Vajravārāhī, his female Buddha consort, with his two principal hands crossed, he demonstrates that skillful means (or liberative techniques, Skt. *upāya*) [the right hand], and transcendental wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*) [the left hand] are in eternal union.
  - c & d. the two uppermost hands hold the flayed, raw elephant-skin behind the upper body, symbolizing the total destruction of ignorance
  - e. in the third right hand he holds a double-pellet drum (Skt. *ḍamaru*), symbolizing that he proclaims joyous tidings [of Buddhological victory]
  - f. in the fourth right hand he holds a battle-ax (Skt. *paraśu*), with which he cuts off births and deaths
  - g. in the fifth right hand he holds a flaying knife (Tib. *gri gug*, pronounced drigug; Skt. *karṭṭṛkā*), with which he cuts off pride and the six sins:
    - 1) pride
    - 2) doubt
    - 3) lack of serious devotion
    - 4) distraction
    - 5) inattention
    - 6) boredom
  - h. in the sixth right hand he holds a trident (Skt. *triśūla*) [in the drawing he holds a single pointed spear], symbolizing that he destroys sins pertaining to the three *lokas*, that is, the "root" (Skt. *mūla*) sins of
    - 1) anger
    - 2) sloth
    - 3) lust
  - i. in the third left hand [note that in spite of its low position the arm emerges from the shoulder in the second position right behind the arm of the hand that holds the *ghaṇṭā*] he holds a *khaṭvāṅga* (a staff with three heads

- and a *viśvavajra* impaled on it), symbolizing that he has eliminated all ideas that regard things as material or immaterial
- j. in the fourth left hand he holds a skull cup (Skt. *kapāla*) filled with blood, symbolizing knowledge regarding the nature of sentient beings
  - k. in the fifth left hand he holds the *vajra* noose (Skt. *vajrapāśa*), which symbolizes that he has removed all delusions (Skt. *moha*, "stupidity")
  - l. in the sixth left hand he holds the four-faced head of Brahmā (Skt. *Brahmākapāla*) to symbolize his great compassion, [because of which] he still lives in the world of beings [in order to lead them to their respective salvations]
6. with his outstretched right leg he treads on the prostrate, emaciated red figure of Kālarātri (Tib. Dus mtshan ma, literally, "Female Symbol of Time"), who holds a flaying knife (Skt. *karttrkā*) and a skull cup (Skt. *kapāla*),<sup>6</sup> and who symbolizes the extreme of *nirvāṇa* (i.e., believing in *nirvāṇa* as a separate realm or as representing complete cessation)
  7. with his bent left leg, he treads on the form of a "black destroyer" (Skt. Bhairava), who lies face down holding a *ḍamaru* and a *karttrkā* in his two left hands and a *kapāla* and a *khaṭvāṅga* in his two right hands and who symbolizes the extreme of eternal *saṃsāra* (i.e., believing that there is no mode of experience or existence beyond suffering in the realms of rebirth)
  8. his topknot of hair (Skt. *merujaṭāmukuta*) symbolizes that he has acquired merits (Skt. *puṇya*) to the fullest measure and it is adorned with a gem that grants all desires (Skt. *cintāmaṇi*)
  9. the crescent "first day" moon in the left side of his hair<sup>7</sup> symbolizes the fact that the Bodhisattva mind attains higher and higher degrees, like the waxing moon (a reference to the thirteen stages of the tantric path of the Bodhisattva)
  10. the *viśvavajra* encased in the topknot of the hair arrangement is multicolored like the *maṇḍala* and symbolizes that his acts serve all sentient beings
  11. the five skulls adorning each of his four heads/faces symbolize that the five transcendent insights (Skt. *jñāna*) are perfectly developed
  12. the garland of fifty freshly severed heads symbolizes that the fifty sounds [of the Sanskrit alphabet] have been purified
  13. that all of his faces frown and his teeth are clenched symbolizes that he has overcome Māra and all heresies
  14. he is adorned with human bone ornaments that symbolize the six *pāramitās*:
    - a. his earrings symbolize the perfection of tolerance
    - b. his necklace symbolizes the perfection of generosity
    - c. his bracelets symbolize the perfection of morality
    - d. his girdle symbolizes the perfection of vigor
    - e. the wheel on the crown of his head [usually worn on the chest?] symbolizes the perfection of meditation (Skt. *dhyāna*)
    - f. the ashes from the cremation fields (smeared over his body) symbolize the perfection of transcendent wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*)
  15. the loosened tiger's skin around his waist symbolizes:
    - a. his destruction of Māra by having cast off all belief in the reality of matter and of mind
    - b. that the virtue of his three aspects is fully developed
      - 1) body (*kāya*)
      - 2) speech (*vāk*)
      - 3) mind (*citta*)
    - c. that he saves erring beings who are overpowered by the five passions:
      - 1) bewilderment/ignorance (Skt. *moha*)
      - 2) anger (Skt. *krodha*)
      - 3) pride (Skt. *abhimāna*)
      - 4) passion (Skt. *rāga*)
      - 5) jealousy (Skt. *īrṣyā*)
  16. there are nine aspects of his splendor and magnificence:
    - a. bodily symmetry
    - b. bodily grace
    - c. heroic visage
    - d. stern visage
    - e. severe visage
    - f. full of energy
    - g. awe-inspiring
    - h. compassionate
    - i. features have a peaceful cast

B. Vajravārāhī embraces him:

1. her color, red, symbolizes service to all sentient beings
2. she has only one face, to symbolize that in the state of reality (Skt. *tathatā*) all things have but one taste (i.e. total nonduality of subject-object/knower-knowing-known)
3. her two hands symbolize that she knows the two truths:
  - a. apparent (Skt. *vyavahārika*), the observational reality of the phenomenal world
  - b. absolute (Skt. *paramārthika*), the experiential reality of the noumenal realm (Skt. *sūnyatā*), in which all phenomena have no independent or permanent existence
4. holding a skull cup (Skt. *kapāla*) full of blood she embraces her consort, symbolizing that she confers supreme bliss (Skt. *mahāsukhā*)
5. her right hand holds the *karttikā* that she waves in the ten directions, symbolizing that transcendental wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*) cuts away every conceptual thought
6. her loosened hair symbolizes that she has untied the knot that binds all things to their appearance
7. her nudity symbolizes that she is freed from the obscuring veils of the (five) passions (see above)
8. she is three-eyed (see above)
9. she wears a garland of fifty freshly severed heads (see above)
10. she wears five dried skulls as her diadem (see above)
11. she wears the five bone ornaments (see above)
12. she holds the body of the lord (Skt. *bhagavān*) with her limbs and embraces him, symbolizing that she (who represents *prajñā*) is inseparable from him (who represents *upāya*)

C. the union of the two symbolizes:

1. the male is:
  - a. the phenomenal
  - b. skillful means (Skt. *upāya*)
  - c. great compassion (Skt. *mahākaruṇā*)
2. the female is:
  - a. the noumenal (Skt. *sūnyatā*)
  - b. transcendental wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*)
  - c. peaceful or tranquil (Skt. *śānti* or *śāntika*)

d. great bliss (Skt. *mahāsukhā*)

3. by their touching at all points (including sexual union) they symbolize that these [conceptions] are in totally interpenetrating (absolute) union (Skt. *yuganaddha*)
4. the flame of supreme transcendent insight (Skt. *mahājñāna*) that surrounds the two figures destroys all obstacles and evil influences both inside and outside the practitioner

The *maṇḍala* of Cakrasaṃvara is arranged with the deities in four concentric circles around the central figure and with four gate and four intermediate corner deities. Like the divine couple in the center, the deities of the *maṇḍala* have very complex symbolism. According to Luipa's commentary they represent the thirty-seven "wings," or factors, of enlightenment (Skt. *bodhipākṣya*). In the following, they are numbered 1 through 37 in accordance with this system. These figures are visible in cat. nos. 92 and 117 as noted below.<sup>8</sup>

I. Deities and vases on the inner petals of the lotus (in cat. nos. 92 and 117, these deities occur in the flame auras of Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī rather than on their lotus pedestals)

A. deities of the four directions

1. East, Dākinī, blue, symbolizes bodily mindfulness
2. North, Lāmā, green, symbolizes the mindfulness of feelings
3. West, Khaṇḍarohā, red, symbolizes the mindfulness of natures
4. South, Rūpinī, yellow, symbolizes the mindfulness of thoughts

B. vases on the intermediate petals

Not shown in cat. no. 117 but seen in the aura of cat. no. 92.

II. Deities in the inner circle surrounding the central lotus, seen in cat. no. 117 as the nine blue couples across the top (the usual number is eight couples). These are the heroes and heroines that represent the mind (Skt. *citta*) aspect of enlightenment, whose range is in the sky. (Name of female given first.)

5. Praçaṇḍā, symbolizing the base of magical power longing, with Khaṇḍakapāla
6. Praçaṇḍakṣī, symbolizing the base of magical power in analysis, with Mahākāṇkāla
7. Prabhāvatī, symbolizing the base of magical power in analysis, with Kāṇkāla
8. Mahānāsā, symbolizing the base of magical power in thought, with Vikāṭadamṣṭrin

9. Vīramatī, symbolizing the faculty of faith, with Surāvairin
  10. Kharvarī, symbolizing the faculty of striving, with Amitābha<sup>9</sup>
  11. Laṅkeśvarī, symbolizing the faculty of mindfulness, with Vajraprabha
  12. Drumachāyā, symbolizing the faculty of *samādhi*, with Vajradeha
- III. Deities in the middle circle, seen in cat. no. 117 as the nine red couples in the upper half of the two side columns of *maṇḍala* deities (the standard number is eight couples). These are the deities that represent the speech (Skt. *vāk*) aspect of enlightenment, whose range is on the earth. (Name of female given first.)
13. Irāvati, symbolizing the faculty of insight, with Aṅkuraka
  14. Mahābhairavā, symbolizing the power of faith, with Vajrajaṭila
  15. Vāyuvagā, symbolizing the power of striving, with Mahāvīra
  16. Surabhakṣī, symbolizing the power of mindfulness, with Vajrahūmkāra
  17. Śyāmādevī, symbolizing the power of *samādhi*, with Subhadra
  18. Subhadrā, symbolizing the power of insight, with Vajrabhadra
  19. Hayakarṇī, symbolizing the *samādhi* limb of enlightenment, with Mahābhairava
  20. Khagānanā, symbolizing the striving limb of enlightenment, with Virūpākṣa
- IV. Deities of the outer circle, seen in cat. no. 117 as the eight white couples in the lower half of the two side columns of the *maṇḍala* deities. These are the deities that represent the body (Skt. *kāya*) aspect of enlightenment, whose range is under the earth. (Name of female given first.)
21. Cakravegā, symbolizing the joy limb of enlightenment, with Mahābala
  22. Khaṇḍarohā, symbolizing the cathartic limb of enlightenment, with Ratnavajra
  23. Śauṇḍinī, symbolizing the analysis of the doctrine limb of enlightenment, with Hayagrīva
  24. Cakravarminī, symbolizing the mindfulness limb of enlightenment, with Ākāśagarbha
  25. Suvīrā, symbolizing the equanimity limb of enlightenment, with Śrī Heruka
  26. Mahābalā, symbolizing the right understanding, with Padmanarteśvara
  27. Cakravartinī, symbolizing the right conception, with Vairocana
  28. Mahāvīryā, symbolizing the right speech, with Vajrasattva
- V. Door guardianesses, posted at the four gates and the four intermediate corners, are represented in cat. no. 117 as the row of Ḍākinīs across the bottom. Because of their distinctive colors these figures are specifically identifiable.
29. east gate  
Kākāsyā, blue with crow's face, symbolizes right bodily action
  30. north gate  
Ulūkāsyā, green with owl's face, symbolizes right livelihood
  31. west gate  
Śvānāsyā, red with dog's face, symbolizes right effort
  32. south gate  
Sūkarāsyā, yellow with boar's face, symbolizes right mindfulness
  33. [Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī symbolize the right *samādhi*, which is next in the sequence of the thirty-seven wings of enlightenment]
  34. southeast  
Yamadāhī (right, blue; left, yellow) symbolizes generation of the virtuous qualities not yet arisen
  35. southwest  
Yamadūti (right, yellow; left, red) symbolizes generation of the virtuous qualities that have arisen
  36. northwest  
Yamadaṃṣṭrī (right, red; left, green) symbolizes the elimination of nonvirtuous qualities that have arisen
  37. northeast  
Yamamathanī (right, green; left, blue) symbolizes the avoidance of the nonvirtuous qualities that have not yet arisen

JCH

1. The information in this Appendix is mainly drawn from two sources. See Kazi Dewa-samdup, ed., *Shrīchakrasambhāra Tantra: A Buddhist Tantra* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1919; reprint, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1987); Shinichi Tsuda, *The Saṃvarodaya-Tantra: Selected Chapters* (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1974).
2. These may differ substantially.
3. Kazi Dewa-samdup, *Shrīchakrasambhāra Tantra*, 74.
4. Kazi Dewa-samdup, *Shrīchakrasambhāra Tantra*, 74.
5. Kazi Dewa-samdup, *Shrīchakrasambhāra Tantra*, 94-101.
6. In the drawing of Cakrasaṃvara, neither Kālarātrī nor Bhairava conform to these descriptions.
7. The moon is extremely small in the drawing and in cat. no. 117, and apparently lacking in cat. no. 92.
8. Adapted from Alex Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973), 8-9; and Ngor Thar rse mkhan po, bSod nams rgya mtsho, *Tibetan Maṇḍalas: The Ngor Collection* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983), vol. 2, no. 62. Also Kazi Dewa-samdup, *Shrīchakrasambhāra Tantra*, 110-113. The *bodhipākṣya* are among the earliest systematic codifications of the process of enlightenment and are



found throughout the Buddhist world. The details of the association I have presented follow Luipa's system presented in Wayman. The symbolic correlations are not specifically stated in the *tantra* itself, which is silent regarding such matters, but are given in various commentaries and practice manuals. Kazi Dewa-samdup, *Shrichakrāsambhara Tantra*, 110-113.

9. Not the Buddha of the same name, but here in the more general sense, One of Limitless light.

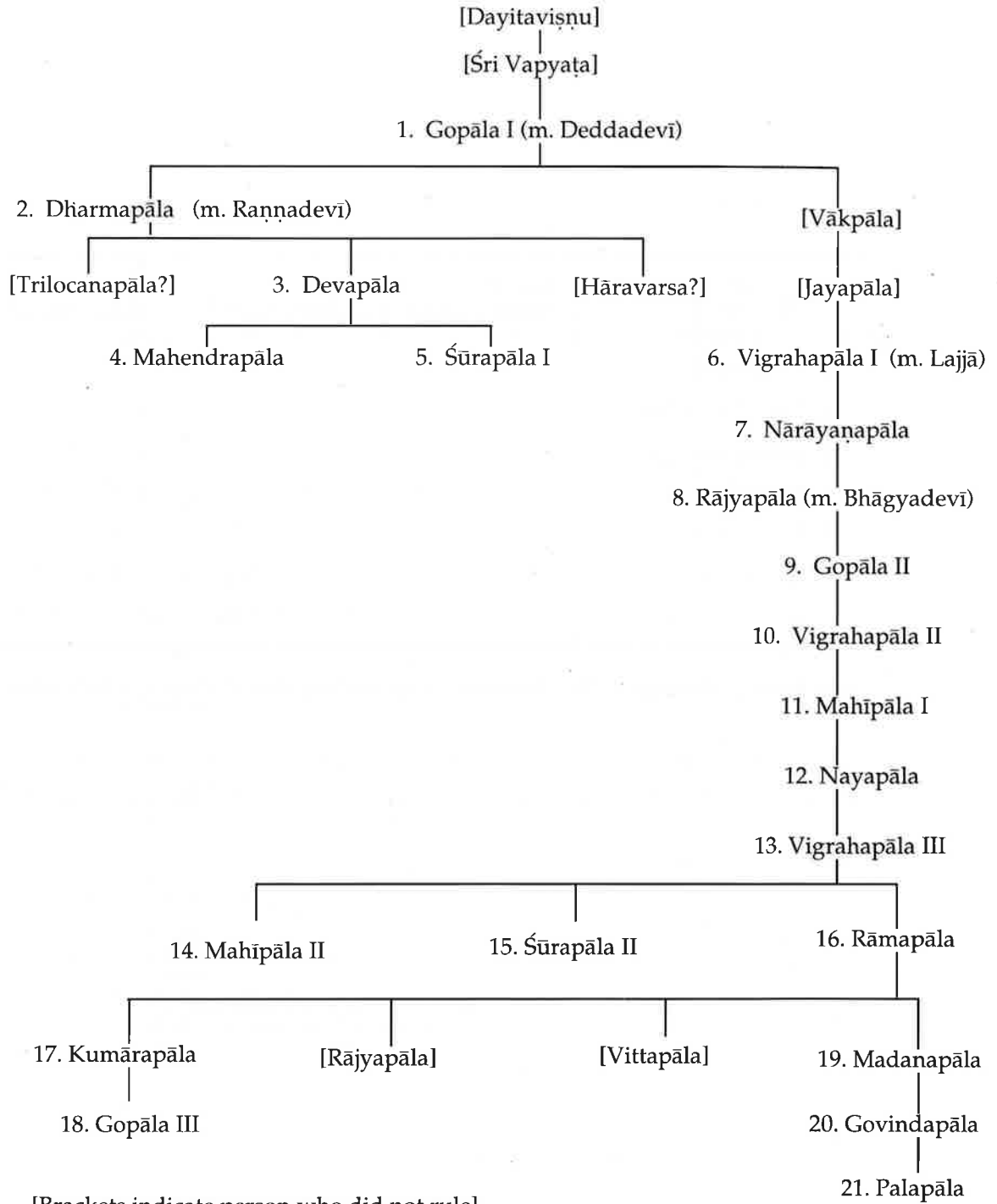
## APPENDIX III : CHRONOLOGICAL CHARTS AND TABLES

**Chart 1**  
**Pāla Chronology**

King	Known Reign Length	Approximate Dates
1. Gopāla I	?	ca. 750-775
2. Dharmapāla	32	ca. 775-812
3. Devapāla	35	ca. 812-850
4. Mahendrapāla	15	ca. 850-865
5. Śūrapāla I	5	ca. 865-873
6. Vighrapāla I	?	ca. 873-875
7. Nārāyaṇapāla	54	ca. 875-932
8. Rājyapāla	32 + 5?	ca. 932-967
9. Gopāla II	17	ca. 967-987
10. Vighrapāla II	?	ca. 987-992
11. Mahīpāla I	48	ca. 992-1042
12. Nayapāla	15	ca. 1042-1058
13. Vighrapāla III	26	ca. 1058-1085
14. Mahīpāla II	?	ca. 1085-1086
15. Śūrapāla II (Surapāla)	?	ca. 1086-1087
16. Rāmapāla	53	ca. 1087-1141
17. Kumārapāla	?	ca. 1141-1143
18. Gopāla III	14	ca. 1143-1158
19. Madanapāla	18	ca. 1158-1176
20. Govindapāla	4?	ca. 1176-1180
21. Palapāla	35	ca. 1180-1214

NOTE: This chronology is based primarily on that established by Dinesh Chandra Sircar and published in Susan L. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984), 37. See that chart and accompanying text for discussion. The chronology has been modified here to include Mahendrapāla as a legitimate Pāla king, as proved by the recently discovered Jagajjibanpur copperplate grant. Mahendrapāla ruled for at least fifteen years, as determined by the highest regnal year given in the known sculptures of his reign. The dates for kings after Mahendrapāla have been adjusted by fifteen years in this chart to accommodate Mahendrapāla's reign.

## Chart 2 Pāla Genealogy





### Chart 3 Candra Chronology

King	Known Reign Length	Dates (Chowdhury) <sup>1</sup>	Dates (Majumdar) <sup>2</sup>
1. Pūrṇacandra	—	?	?
2. Suvarṇacandra	—	?	?
3. Trailokyacandra	—	ca. 900-930	ca. 875-905
4. Śricandra	44 or 46	ca. 930-975	ca. 905-955
5. Kalyāṇacandra	24	ca. 975-1000	ca. 955-985
6. Laḍahacandra	18	ca. 1000-1020	ca. 985-1010
7. Govindacandra	23	ca. 1020-1045	ca. 1010-1035

See also Susan L. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984), 62.

1. Abdul Momin Chowdhury, *Dynastic History of Bengal* (c. 750-1200 A.D.) (Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1967), 278.
2. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, "New Light on the History of Bengal," *Journal of the Asiatic Society* [Bengal] 7, nos. 1-2 (1965), 1.

**Chart 4**  
**Sena Chronology**

King	Reign Length (Majumdar) <sup>1</sup>	Dates (Chowdhury) <sup>2</sup>	Dates (Majumdar) <sup>3</sup>
Sāmantasena <sup>4</sup>	—	—	—
Hemantasena	—	—	(last quarter eleventh century)
Vijayasena	62 or 32	ca. 1097-1160	ca. 1095 (1125?)- 1158
Vallālasena	11	ca. 1160-1178	ca. 1158-1179
Lakṣmaṇasena	27	ca. 1178-1206	ca. 1179-1206
Viśvarūpasena	14	ca. 1206-1220	ca. 1206/1207-?
Keśavasena <sup>5</sup>	3	ca. 1220-1223	ca. 1225-?

For further discussion, see Susan L. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984), 61-64.

1. As given by Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, vol. 1, *The Hindu Period* (Dacca: University of Dacca, 1943), 210-233, especially 231; Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal* (Calcutta: G. Bharadwaj and Co., 1971), 223-243, especially 242.
2. Abdul Momin Chowdhury, *Dynastic History of Bengal (c. 750-1200 A.D.)* (Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1967), 220, 279.
3. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, 210-233, especially 231; Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, 223-243, especially 242.
4. Sāmantasena did not hold royal titles.
5. D. C. Sircar believes that "Keśavasena" is an incorrect reading of Viśvarūpasena. See Dinesh Chandra Sircar, "Madanpārā Plate of Viśvarūpasena," *Journal of the Asiatic Society [Bengal]*, 3rd series, 22, no. 2 (1954): 209-217. For discussion of this point see Chowdhury, *Dynastic History*, 261-262.

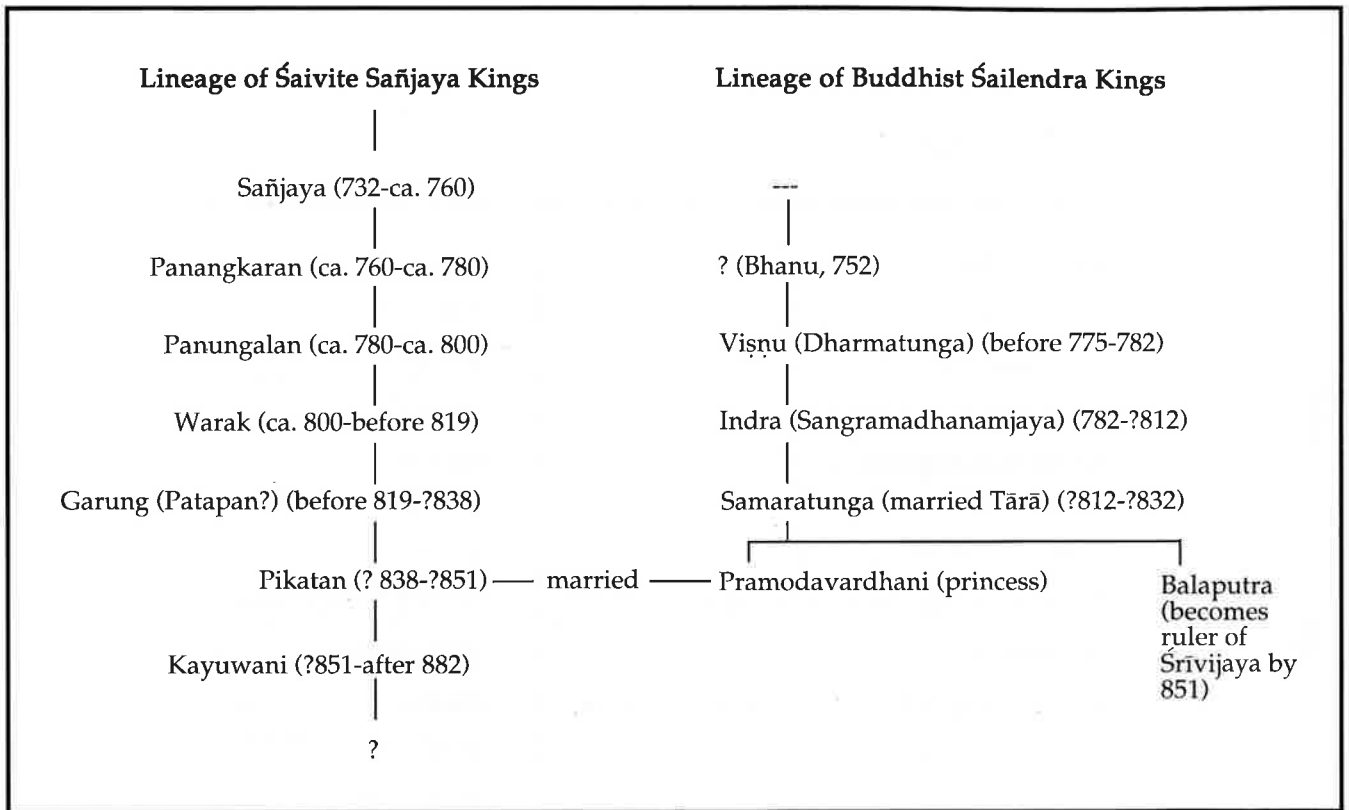
**Chart 5**  
**Kings of Pagan, Myanmar (Burma), ca. 956-1300**

King	Dates
Caw Rahan (Sawyahan)	956-1001
Kloñ Phlū Mañ (Kyaunghpyu)	1001-1021
[PAGAN PERIOD, 1044-1287]:	
Aniruddha (Anawrahta)	1044-1077
Co Lu (Sawlu)	1077-1084
Kalancacsā (Kyanzitha)	1084-1111 [1084-1113?]
Aloncañsū (Alaungsithu)	1111-1167 (1113-1169/70?)
Narasū (Kalakya)	1167-1170 (1169/70-1170?)
Narasinkha (Naratheinkha)	1170-1173 (1170-1174?)
Narapatisithu	1173-1210
Nātonmyā (Nadaungmya)	1210-1234
Klacwā (Kyazwa)	1234-1249
Uccanā (Uzana)	1249-1254
Narathihapade	1254-1287
[FALL OF PAGAN TO MONGOLS]	1287
Klawcwā (Kyawzwa) [installed as vassal king of Mongols]	1287-1300
[MONGOLS REPULSED BY SHANS]	1303

Following Michael Aung-Thwin, *Pagan, The Origins of Modern Burma* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 22, with my additions in brackets.

## Chart 6

### Central Javanese Chronology



Following D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1987), 55.



## Chart 7

### Early Rulers of East Java

Devasimha	dates?
Gajayana	760
A ... nana (?)	dates?
Sindok, Raka of Hino	929-947
Sri Isanattungavijaya (daughter of Sindok)	947 (?)
Makutavamsavardhana	dates?
Dharmavamsa Anantavikrama	991-1007 [985-1006]
Airlangga	1019-1049
Juru (Janggala?)	1060
Jayavarsa of Kediri	1104
Kamesvara I	1115-1130
Jayabhaya	1135-1157
Sarvvesvara	1160
Aryyesvara	1171
Kroñcaryyadipa, Gandra	1181
Kamesvara II	1185
Sarvvesvara II, Srngga	1190-1200
Kertajaya	1216-1222

Following D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1987), 970-971, who in turn based his chart on N. J. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis* (s'Gravenhage, 1931). Dates in brackets are mine.

## Chart 8

### Outline History of Śrīvijaya<sup>1</sup>

[Some dates are approximate]

[?]	Origin of Śrīvijaya empire
670-673	Vague mention of Śrīvijayan embassies to China in Chinese sources
671	Yijing (I-tsing) visits Foshi (Fo-shih) [Śrīvijaya]
682	Inscriptional record of victorious military campaign (by King Jayanāśa? [Jayanāga?]), which was carried out by boat and which brought victory, power, and wealth to Śrīvijaya
683-686	Administrative inscriptions show existence of Buddhist kingdom named Śrīvijaya around Palembang that had just conquered the hinterlands and was preparing a military expedition against Java
684	King Jayanāśa founds public park at Talang Tuwo (near Palembang); inscription recording this event provides first dated evidence of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the region
685-689	Yijing resides in Foshi; journeys to Guangdong (Canton), but returns shortly thereafter to Foshi
692	Yijing sends manuscripts of his two memoirs to China
694-742	No Śrīvijayan inscriptions, but Chinese records of embassies sent
695	Yijing returns to China
695	Embassy to China (perhaps sent by King Jayanāśa?)
[702-724?	King Indravarman]
702	Embassy to China in the name of King Indravarman
716	Embassy to China in the name of King Indravarman
724	Embassy to China in the name of King Indravarman
[728-742+?	King Liuteng weigong (Liu-t'eng wei-kung)]
728	Embassy to China in the name of a king called "Liuteng weigong" in Chinese sources
742	Embassy to China in the name of King Liuteng weigong
775	Sanskrit inscription engraved on Ligor stele of Wat Sema Muang reveals that a Sumatran kingdom had established a foothold on the Malay Peninsula at Ligor, where a king of Śrīvijaya (Dharmasetu?) had built a number of Buddhist structures, including one dedicated to the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi
824	Wife of Samaratunga, the Śailendra ruler of Java, is Princess Tārā of Śrīvijaya

- 850 Or earlier? Prince Bālaputra, son of the deceased Śailendra king Samaratunga of Java, flees Java and goes to Sumatra. A Chinese record of an embassy in 904-905 reveals that the Chinese begin to call Śrīvijaya by a new name around this time.
- 851 Bālaputra donates monastery at Nālandā; Nālandā inscription records that Bālaputra was already ruler of Śrīvijaya [Suvarṇadvīpa]
- 955 "Mahārāja of Zabag" noted in Arabic source as having great power
- 960, 962, 971, 972, 974, 975, 980, 983, and 988 Chinese records of the arrival of Śrīvijayan embassies in China; embassies continue to be received by the Song court in China until 1178
- 971 Chinese trading office in Guangdong has merchants from Śrīvijaya in residence
- 988 Śrīvijaya attacked by Dharmavaṃśa (ca. 985-ca. 1006), king of East Java
- 990 Śrīvijayan ambassador at the Chinese imperial court leaves for home; at Guangdong learns that Śrīvijaya was under attack by the East Javanese
- 991 Śrīvijayan ambassador waits at Guangdong for a year
- 992 Śrīvijayan ambassador returns to China to request imperial protection for his country from East Javanese
- 992 Śrīvijaya repulses attack of East Javanese
- 1003 Śrīvijaya sends tribute to China in gratitude for help in East Javanese war
- 1003/1004 King Māravijayattūṅavarman of Śrīvijaya builds a Buddhist temple (in Śrīvijaya?) to commemorate his defeat of the East Javanese king Dharmavaṃśa and to offer prayers for the life of the Chinese emperor
- 1006 King Māravijayattūṅavarman builds a monastery for Śrīvijayan merchants at Nāgaṇṭṭinam in south India; the Cōla king Rājārāja I grants revenues to the establishment
- 1008 King Māravijayattūṅavarman sends embassy to China
- 1013-1025 Atiśa in Śrīvijaya studying with Dharmakīrti

- 1025 Cōḷa raid on Śrīvijaya cripples Śrīvijaya empire
- 1028 King Śrī Deva sends embassy to China; accorded great honors
- 1030 East Javanese and Śrīvijayan empires united through a marriage alliance; motivation may have been to strengthen their forces in the face of the Cōḷa threat
- 1064 Inscription near Jambi mentions Dharmavīra
- 1068 Cōḷas conquer Kidāram on behalf of Śrīvijaya
- 1077 Śrīvijaya mission to China
- 1090 New charter for Nāgapattinam monastery granted by Cōḷa king Kulottunga I at the request of Śrīvijaya
- 1178 Chinese Song emperor finds expense of receiving Śrīvijayan embassies too great; directs that Śrīvijayans proceed no further than Fujian (Fukien), but be permitted to trade there as usual
- 1178 Śrīvijaya mentioned as the third wealthiest foreign power by Chinese writer
- 1225 *Zhufan ji* (*Chu-fan chi*) records that Śrīvijaya has fifteen vassal states in Java and the Malay Peninsula
- 1281 Śrīvijaya embassy to China
- 1292 Śrīvijaya name no longer used in Chinese references; area now referred to as Malayu; Marco Polo visits Sumatra and mentions that Malayu is the foremost state in Sumatra

1. Extracted from George Coèdes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella and trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968), 81-85; D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1987), 47-71. Some dates and names have been corrected to correlate with more accurate information obtained from other sources.



# Chart 9

## Nanzhao Kingdom of Yunnan, 649-902<sup>1</sup>

Name [variants]	Relation	Native Title	Tang Title	Reign date
Shelong (She-lung) [Mengjia du (Meng-chia tu)]		Mengshe zhao (Meng-she chao)		649-?
Ximuluo (Hsi-nu-lo) [Longduoluo (Lung-to-lo)] <sup>2</sup>	son	Gaozu (Kao-tsu) Qijia wang (Ch'i-chia wang)		653-674
Luoshengyan (Lo-sheng-yen)	son	Shizong (Shih-tsung) Xingzong wang (Hsing-tsung wang)		674-712
Yange (Yen-ko) <sup>3</sup>				
Shengluopi (Sheng-lo-p'i)	son	Taizong (T'ai-tsung) Weicheng wang (Wei-ch'eng wang)	Taideng junwang (T'ai-teng chunwang)	712-728
Pilege (P'i-lo-ko)	son		Yunnan wang (Yun-nan wang) Guji (Kuei-i)	728-748
Geluofeng (Ko-lo-feng)	son	Shenwu wang (Shen-wu wang)	Yunnan wang (Yun-nan wang)	748-779
Fengqieyi (Feng-ch'ieh-i) <sup>4</sup>				
Yimouxun (I-mou-hsün)	grandson	Xiaohuan wang (Hsiao-huan wang)	Nanzhao wang (Nan-chao wang) Kiding wang (Ih-tung wang)	779-808
Xungequan (Hsün-ko-ch'ian)	son	Xiaohui wang (Hsiao-hui wang) Piaoxin (P'iao-hsin)	Nanzhao wang (Nan-chao wang)	808-809
Quanlongsheng (Ch'ian-lung-sheng)	son	You wang (Yu wang)	Nanzhao wang (Nan-chao wang)	809-816
Quanlisheng (Ch'ian-li-sheng)	y. brother	Jing wang (Ching wang)	Nanzhao wang (Nan-chao wang)	816-823
Quanfeng you (Ch'ian Feng-yu)	y. brother	Zhaocheng wang (Chao-ch'eng wang)	Nanzhao wang (Nan-chao wang)	823-859
Shilong (Shih-lung) [Qiuilong (Ch'iu-lung)]	son	Jingzhuang huangdi (Ching-chuang huang-ti)		859-877
Longshun (Fa) (Lung-shun) (Fa)	son	Xuanwudi (Hsuan-wu-ti) Moheluocuo (Mo-ho-lo-ts'o) Tulun wang (T'u-lun wang)		877-897
Shunhuazhen (Shun-hua-chen)	son	Xiao'aidi (Hsiao-ai-ti)		897-902

1. Primarily following Charles Beckus, *The Nan-chao kingdom and Tang China's southwestern frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 58.
2. Believed to be a thirty-sixth generation descendant from the Maurya Emperor Asoka.
3. May never have existed.
4. Died before Geluofeng and did not assume rule.

## Chart 10

### Dali and Other Later Kingdoms of Yunnan

#### Dachanghe kingdom 902-928

(Ta-ch'ang-ho kingdom)

Zheng Maisi (Cheng Mai-ssu)	902-909
Zheng Min (Cheng Min) (Zheng Renmin [Cheng Jen-min])	910-926
Zheng Longdan (Cheng Lung-tan)	927-928

#### Datianxing kingdom 928-929

Ta-t'ien-hsing kingdom

Zhao Shanzheng (Chao Shan-cheng)	928-929
----------------------------------	---------

#### Dayining kingdom 929-937

(Ta-i-ning kingdom)

Yang Ganzhen (Yang Kan-chen)	929-937
------------------------------	---------

#### Dali kingdom 937-1253

(Ta-li kingdom)

Duan Siping (Tuan Ssu-p'ing)	937-944
Duan Siying (Tuan Ssu-ying)	945
Duan Siliang (Tuan Ssu-liang)	946-951
Duan Sicong (Tuan Ssu-ts'ung)	952-968
Duan Sushun (Tuan Su-shun)	969-985
Duan Suying (Tuan Su-ying)	986-1009
Duan Sulian (Tuan Su-lien)	1010-1022
Duan Sulong (Tuan Su-lung)	1023-1026
Duan Suzhen (Tuan Su-chen)	1027-1041
Duan Suxing (Tuan Su-hsing)	1042-1044
Duan Sulian [2nd] (Tuan Su-lien [2nd])	1045-1074

Duan Lianyi (Tuan Lien-i)	1075-1080
Duan Shouhui (Tuan Shou-huei)	1081
Duan Zhengming (Tuan Cheng-ming)	1082-1094
<b>Dazhong kingdom (Interregnum)</b> (Ta-chung kingdom)	
Gao Shengtai (Kao Sheng-t'ai)	1094-1095
<b>Hou (later) Dali kingdom</b> (Hou Ta-li kingdom)	
Duan Zhengchun (Tuan Cheng-ch'un)	1096-1108
Duan Zhengyan (Tuan Cheng-yen)	1109-1147
Duan Zhengxing (Tuan Cheng-hsing)	1148-1171
Duan Zhixing (Tuan Chih-hsing)	1172-1200
Duan Zhilian (Tuan Chih-lien)	1201-1204
Duan Zhixiang (Tuan Chih-hsiang)	1205-1238
Duan Xiangxing (Tuan Hsiang-hsing)	1239-1251
Duan Xingzhi (Tuan Hsing-chih)	1252-1253

From Charles Backus, *The Nan-chao kingdom and T'ang China's southwestern frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 162.

## Chart 11

### Chronology of the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal

#### GOPĀLA PERIOD

Five or eight kings, all legendary or protohistorical sixth century B.C.?

#### EARLY KIRĀTI PERIOD, FOURTH THROUGH FIRST CENTURIES B.C.

Between twenty-two and twenty-eight kings

Events:

Legend of Buddha's visit to Swayambhūnāth

Aśoka founds *stūpas* at Patan

#### LATE KIRĀTI PERIOD, FIRST THROUGH THIRD CENTURIES

Somavamśi dynasty, five kings

Sūryavamśi dynasty, lists of up to fourteen kings

#### LICCHAVI PERIOD, ca. 300 TO ca. 879

Lists of up to thirty-seven gods and kings prior to founding of dynasty

Major events:

King Jayadeva I conquers Kathmandu Valley, third century?

Vṛṣadeva founds or builds *stūpa* at Swayambhūnāth

Ābhīra Gupta dynasty competes with Licchavis 506-641

First Period of the Ṭhakurīs (Chieftains)<sup>1</sup>

(The period was previously known as the first [Kṣatriya Rajput]

Ṭhakurī dynasty, 602-1043, but might better be known as the first period of rule by the *ṭhakurīs* [chieftains].)

Probable period of vassalage to Tibet 641-705

#### "TRANSITIONAL PERIOD," ca. 879-1200

Nepal era (*samvat*) begins 880

Event:

Visit of Atiśa 1040

Atiśa founds Thām Bahal

Atiśa credited with introduction of Tantric Buddhism into Nepal

Second Period of the Ṭhakurīs (Chieftains)

(The period was previously known as the second [Nawakot Vaiśya] Ṭhakurī Dynasty, 1043-1083, but might better be known as the second period of rule by the *ṭhakurīs* [chieftains].)

Third Period of the Ṭhakurīs (Chieftains)

(The period was previously known as the third [Kṣatriya Rajput] Ṭhakurī dynasty, 1083-1200, but might better be known as the third

period of rule by the *ṭhakurīs* [chieftains].)

Events:

Tirhutīā “Karnāṭa” invasion<sup>2</sup>  
(may have been little more than raids) 1097-1311  
Tirhutīā capital established at Simraongarh

**EARLY MALLA PERIOD, 1200-1482**

Events:

Harisimha of Tirhut flees Ghiyās ud-din Tughlaq; comes to the  
Kathmandu Valley for asylum and introduces goddess Taleju 1324-1325  
Devastating raid by Shams ud-din<sup>3</sup>  
(only major Muslim incursion into Nepal) 1344-1349

**“THREE KINGDOM” MALLA PERIOD, 1482-1768/1769**

Reign divided among the sons of Yakṣamalla, who began ruling jointly, but soon began to establish their respective individual “kingdoms.” As a result, during this period the three major cities of the Kathmandu Valley were ruled by independent and competing houses of Mallas: the Mallas of Bhaktapur, the Mallas of Kathmandu, and the Mallas of Patan.

Shah Interlude 1764-1765

Malla rule reestablished 1765-1768

**SHAH DYNASTY, 1769-**

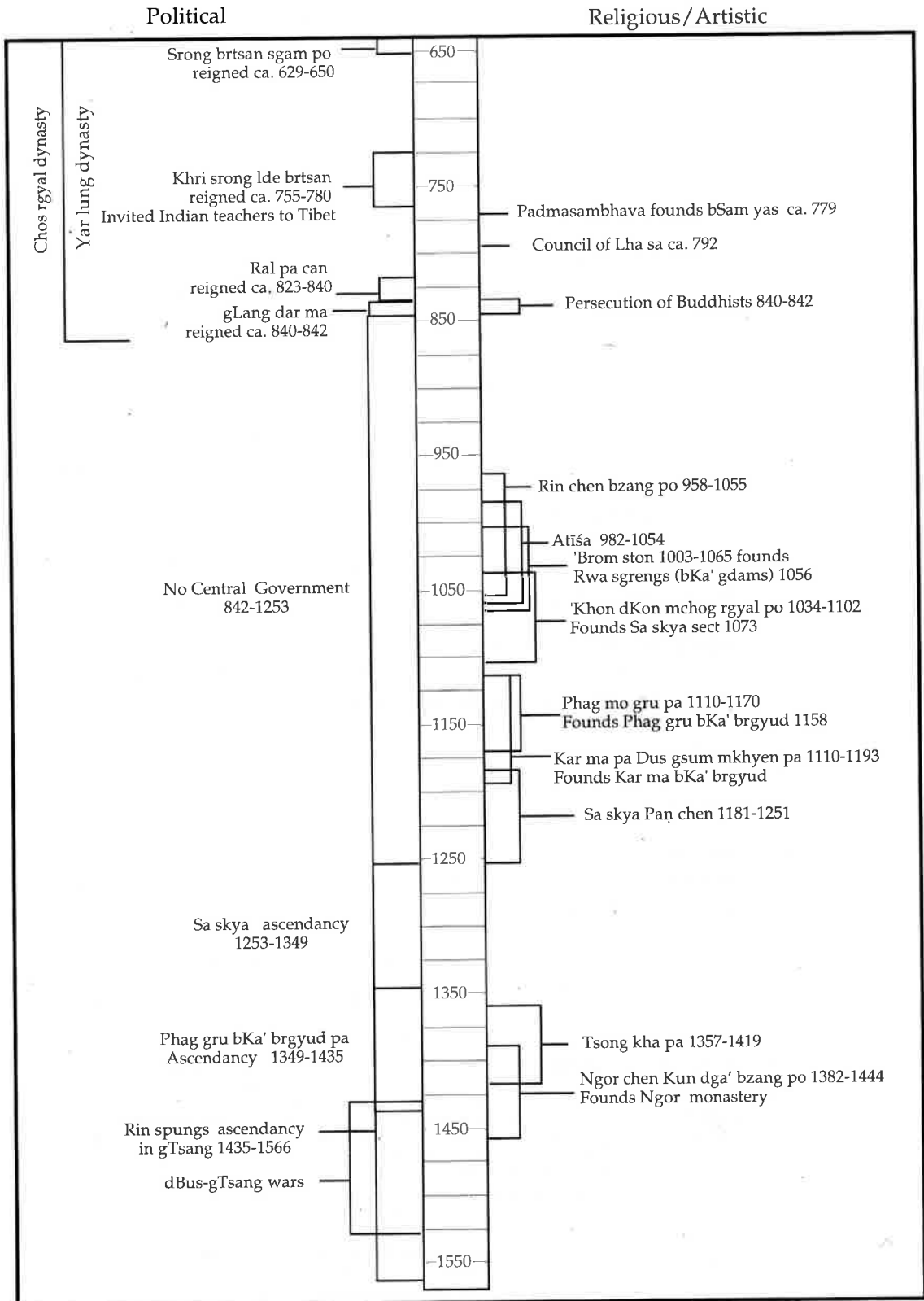
During this period the Śaka *samvat* was reintroduced, and dates on works of art may be in either Nepali *samvat* or in Śaka *samvat*.

During this period of time, the real power of the rulers was often in the hands of members of the Rana family, who were the prime ministers of Nepal.

1. The term *ṭhakuri* means a person of the royal caste, and Slusser ably discredits its use as a dynastic title. See Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 42. The eighteenth-century chroniclers who first used the term surely knew its meaning, but western translators did not, mistakenly giving it a dynastic connotation that was never intended. To call the kings of these periods *ṭhakuri* is simply to say “persons of royal caste,” or, more simply, “kings” or “chieftains.” Therefore, the name is appropriate, although definitely not a dynastic title. In this chronology, I have retained the use of the *ṭhakuri* designation, modified by the term “chieftain” for greater accuracy, although I have used Slusser’s “Transitional” Period classification for the major periodization.
2. The Tirhut “invasion” is placed in this timeframe by most historians. See Luciano Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal*, Serie Orientale Roma 10, Materials for the Study of Nepalese History and Culture (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958), 51-54. The Tirhut invasion into the Kathmandu Valley may partially explain the great influx of Pāla artistic influence into the valley around this time since the art of Tirhut was strongly related to the Pāla idiom.
3. Many see this event as the reason that little architecture in the Kathmandu Valley predates the fourteenth century.



**Chart 12**  
**Tibetan Timeline**



**Chart 13**  
**Tibetan Chronology**  
**With Religious Developments and Related Events in China**

Tibetan History	Religious Development	Related Chinese Events
<p><b>Yar lung dynasty</b></p> <p>ca. 600 gNam ri slon mtshan  reigned ca. 629-650  Srong brtsan sgam po  (first Dharma King)</p> <p>Marriage to Nepali princess  (date uncertain)</p> <p>641 Marries Princess Wencheng</p> <p>649-676 Mang srong mang brtsan</p> <p>670-675 Tibet conquers most of  Central Asia</p> <p>676-704 Khri 'du srong brtsan  continues Central Asian conquest</p> <p>704-755 Khri lde gtsug brtsan</p> <p>710 Khri lde gtsug brtsan  marries Princess Kim Shang</p> <p>b. 718-780? Khri srong lde brtsan  (second Dharma King),  reigned ca. 755-780</p>	<p>641 Introduction of Tang style  Buddhism by Wencheng</p> <p>late 770s Śāntarakṣita and  Padmasambhava in Tibet</p> <p>ca. 779 bSam yas founded</p>	<p><b>618 Founding of Tang</b></p> <p>632 First contacts with China</p> <p>634 Tribute to the Chinese  court</p> <p>635 Tibetans demand Chinese  princess for Srong brtsan</p> <p>640s Tibetan youth sent to  study in China</p> <p>699  700  702  704  705-710</p> <p>Tibetan envoys  at court</p> <p>712-727 Continual invasions  by the Tibetans. Tibetans  defeated in 727</p> <p>730s-740s Wars continue</p> <p>760s-770s Constant war</p> <p>763 Tibetans sack Chang'an</p>

Tibetan History	Religious Development	Related Chinese Events
<p>780?-799 Mu ne brtsan po</p> <p>799-815 Khri lde srong brtsan</p> <p>815-840 Khri gtsug lde brtsan (Ral pa can) is third Dharma King</p> <p>840-842 gLang dar ma 842 Murder of gLang dar ma</p> <p>842 Tibetan empire disintegrates</p> <p><b>Period of Local Principalities</b></p> <p>Gu ge, Sa skya, Yar lung, etc. (numerous local rulers)</p>	<p>779 Buddhism made state religion</p> <p>781 Tibetans request Buddhist teachers from Chinese court; apparently several sent</p> <p>792-794 Council at Lha sa, Indian Mahāyānist wins disputation</p> <p>840-842 Persecution of Buddhism</p> <p><b>"Second Propagation"</b></p> <p>978 kLu mes and Sum pa return from eastern to central Tibet</p> <p>958-1055 Rin chen bzang po lives; in western Tibet and Kashmir from ca. 970</p>	<p>780 Emperor Dezong determines to have peace in all directions</p> <p>781-841 Tibetans conquer and hold Dunhuang</p> <p>784-820 Constant war</p> <p>821-822 Treaty concluded, envoys exchanged</p> <p>823-837 Frequent Tibetan missions to China</p> <p>844-846 Persecution of Buddhism</p> <p>907-960 Five Dynasties period</p> <p>960-1279 Song dynasty</p> <p>1035-1227 Xi Xia in North China</p>

Tibetan History	Religious Development	Related Chinese Events
<b>Mongol overlordship</b> 1207 Eastern Tibetan princes submit to Mongols 1239 Prince Godan attacks Tibet	1042-1054 Atiśa active in Tibet 1056 'Brom ston founds Rwa sgrengs (first bKa' gdams monastery) 1073 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po founds Sa skya (first Sa skya monastery) 1175-1185 Founding of monasteries of six bKa' rgyud subsects 1204 Śākya Śrī (Kha che paṇ chen) active in Tibet to 1213  1249 Sa skya Paṇḍita appointed suzerain of Tibet  <b>1253 Sa skya ascendancy</b>  1258 'Phags pa defeats Daoists 1260 'Phags pa suzerain of Tibet	1206 Rise of Mongol Empire  1244 Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'Phags pa to China 1247 Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'Phags pa meet Prince Godan  1251 Sa skya Paṇḍita dies in China 1253 'Phags pa meets Godan again to sue for peace  1260 Godan invested as Kubilai, Khan of all the Mongols  <b>1280 Yuan dynasty</b> Kubilai assumes title "Son of Heaven" and rules all China
1252-1253 Second Mongol invasion		





Tibetan History	Religious Development	Related Chinese Events
3) gTsang dynasty	1577-1588 third Dalai Lama teaches extensively in Mongol territory	
1565 Kar ma Tshe brtan	1577 bSod nams rGya mtsho sets out to visit Altan Khan in Koko Nor	1578 Altan Khan gives title "Dalai Lama" to bSod nams rGya mtsho
ca. 1582 Lha dbang rdo rje, active		
ca. 1603 Phun tshog rnam rgyal active	1589-1617 Yon tan rGya mtsho, fourth Dalai Lama	
	1617-1682 Ngag dbang blo bzang rGya mtsho, fifth Dalai Lama	
1623 Kar ma bstan skyong		
<b>1642 Mongol Protectorate</b> (under Guśri Khan of Qōśot)	<b>1642 Dalai Lama ruler of Tibet</b> (established by Guśri Khan)	<b>1644 Manchu (Qing) dynasty</b>
1642-1655 Guśri Khan		1653 fifth Dalai Lama visits Beijing
1655-1660 bKra shis Bātur		
1655-1660 Dayan Khan		
1668-1696 bsTan 'dzin Dalai Khan		
	1683-1706 Tshangs dbyangs rGya mtsho, sixth Dalai Lama	
1696-1697 bsTan 'dzin dbang phyug		
1697-1717 Lha bzang Khan		1701-1703 Manchu summer palaces at Chengde begun
1705 Lha bzang Khan attacks Lha sa, executes Dalai Lama's regent		
	1708-1757 bsKal bzang rGya mtsho, seventh Dalai Lama	
1717 Dzungar Mongols take Lha sa		1717-1778 Rol pa'i rdo rje (lCang skya Hutuktu)
1720 Qing army takes Lha sa		
<b>1720/1721 Manchu Overlordship</b>		
1723 Civil war after Qing leave		



## Chart 14

### Events in Gu ge Leading to the Invitation to Atīśa

Based on the *Blue Annals*.<sup>1</sup>

1. Lha bla ma ye shes 'od (reigned until about 940, but lived beyond his reign and maintained command of the army until around 970).
2. Srong ne (died prior to ca. 940).
3. Lha lde (died prior to ca. 940?).
4. 'Od lde (and his two younger brothers bTsun byang chub 'od and Zhi ba'i 'od). During the reign of 'Od lde, Ye shes 'od was captured by the king of Gar log (Qarluq), who demanded ransom for him. When visited by Byang chub 'od, Ye shes 'od told him not to spend the ransom to free him but to spend it to invite Indian *paṇḍitas* to Tibet. 'Od lde sent Nag tsho tshul khriṃs rgyal ba lo tsa ba (b. 1011-?), who was a native of Gung thang, to invite Atīśa to come to Tibet.

1. George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), 244.



Chart 15

Mongol Empire and the Yuan Dynasty

“Main Line” Era Dates in Bold

Mongol Empire Period 1206-1279

Emperor	Personal Name	Mongol name	Dates	Era Name ( <i>nianhao</i> )	Dates
Taizu (T'ai-tsu)	Tāmuclin	Cinggis	1162-1227		1206-1227
Ruizong (Jui-tsung)	Tomi		1186/90-1232		1228
Taizong (T'ai-tsung)	Ögödaï		1186-1241		1229-1241
?	Nimacar		?		1242
Dingzong (T'ing-tsung)	Güyütk		1206-1248		1246-1248
Xianzong (Hsien-tsung)	Möngkä		1209-1259		1251-1259
Shizu (Shih-tsu)	Kublai	Seten	1215-1294	Zhongtong (Chung-t'ung) Zhiyuan (Chih-yüan)	1260-1263 1264-

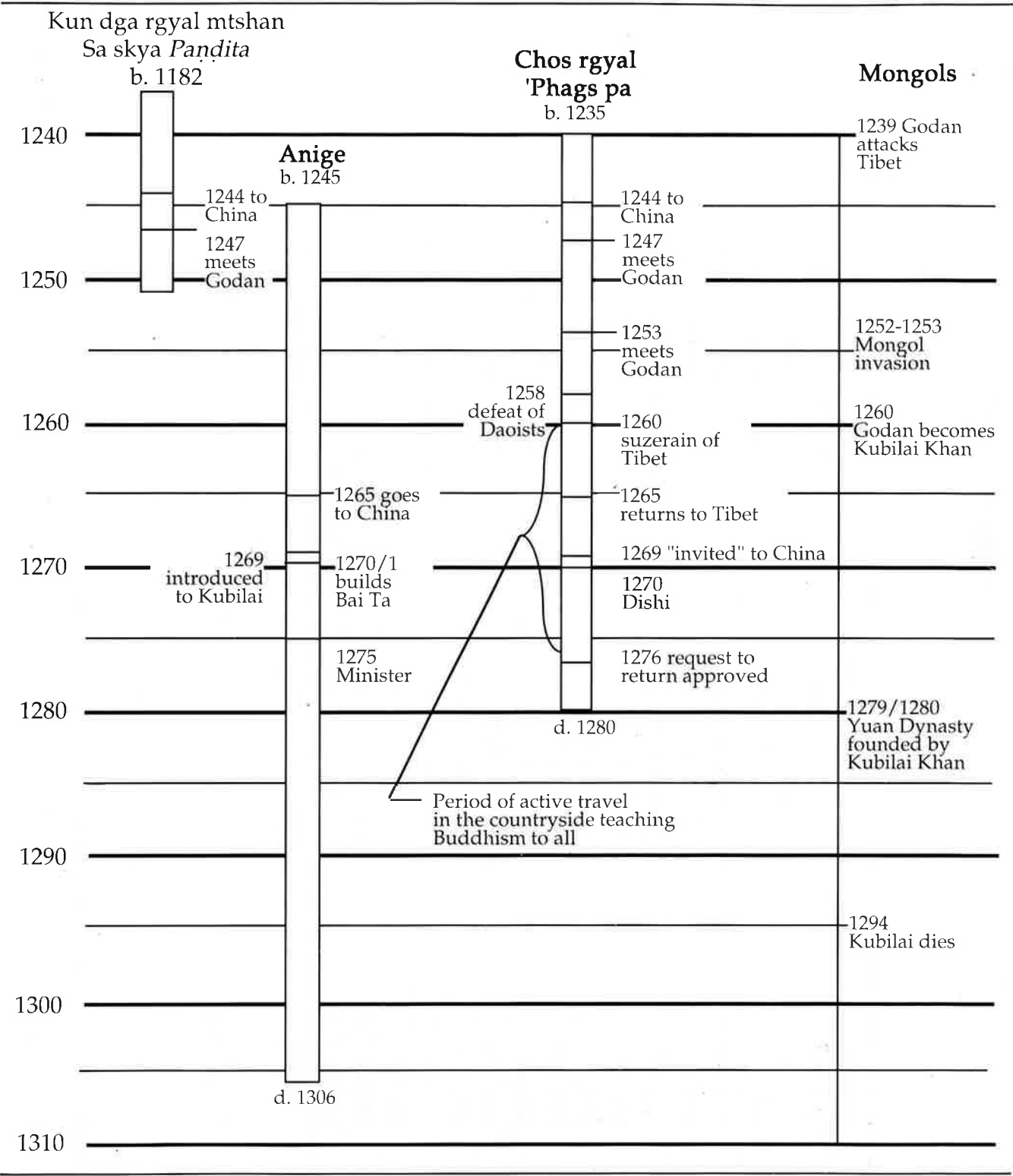
Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty 1279/80-1368

Chengzong (Ch'eng-tsung)	Tāmur	Öjaitu	1265-1307	Yuanzhen (Yüan-chen) Dade (Ta-te)	1295-1296 1297-1307
Wuzong (Wu-tsung)	Haisan	Gülük	1281-1311	Zhida (Chih-ta)	1308-1311
Renzong (Jen-tsung)	Ayur Parlbhadra	Buyantu	1285-1320	Huangqing (Huang-ch'ing) Yanyou (Yen-yu)	1312-1313 1314-1320
Yingzong (Ying-tsung)	Suddhipala	Gueguen	1303-1323	Zhizhi (Chih-chih)	1321-1323
Taidingdi (T'ai-ting-ti)	Yäsun tāmur		1293-1328	Taiding (T'ai-ting) Zhühe (Chih-ho)	1324-1327 1328
?	Ao-Shu-chi-pa <sup>1</sup>		?	Tianshun (T'ien-shun)	1328
Wenzong (Wen-tsung)	Togh tāmur	Jiagatu	1304-1332	Tianli (T'ien-li)	1328-1329
Mingzong (Ming-tsung)	Kusala	Qutuyu	1300-1329	—	
Wenzong (Wen-tsung) (cont.)	Togh tāmur	Jiagatu	1304-1332	Zhishun (Chih-shun)	1330-1332
Ningzong (Ning-tsung)	Irinčinbal		1326-1332	—	
Shundi (Shun-ti)	Togh-an-tāmur		1320-1370	Yuantong (Yüan-t'ung) Zhiyuan (Chih-yüan) Zhizheng (Chih-cheng)	1333-1334 1335-1340 1341-1367

Based on Sherman E. Lee and Wai-kan Ho, *Chinese Art Under the Mongols* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), 75.

1. Transliteration of Mongolian uncertain.

**Chart 16**  
**Major Events in the Lives of Anige and 'Phags Pa**



# Chart 17

## Ming Dynasty 1368-1644

Emperor	Personal Name	Era Name ( <i>nianhao</i> )	Dates
Taizu (T'ai-tsu)	Zhu Yuanzhang (Chu Yüan-chang)	Hongwu (Hung-wu)	1368-1398
Huidi (Hui-ti)	Zhu Yongwen (Chu Yung-wen)	Jianwen (Chien-wen)	1399-1402
Chengzu (Ch'eng-tsu)	Zhu Di (Chu Ti)	Yongle (Yung-lo)	1403-1424
Renzong (Jen-tsung)	Zhu Gaozhi (Chu Kao-chih)	Hongxi (Hung-hsi)	1425
Xuanzong (Hsuan-tsung)	Zhu Zhanji (Chu Chan-chi)	Xuande (Hsüan-te)	1426-1435
Yingzong (Ying-tsung)	Zhu Qizhen (Chu Ch'i-chen)	Zhengtong (Cheng-t'ung)	1436-1449
Daizong (T'ai-tsung)	Zhu Qiye (Chu Ch'i-yü)	Jingtai (Ching-t'ai)	1450-1456
Yingzong (Ying-tsung) <sup>1</sup>	Zhu Qizhen (Chu Ch'i-chen)	Tianshun (T'ien-shun)	1457-1464
Xianzong (Hsien-tsung)	Zhu Jianshen (Chu Chien-shen)	Chenghua (Ch'eng-hua)	1465-1487
Xiaozong (Hsiao-tsung)	Zhu Yudang (Chu Yu-tang)	Hongzhi (Hung-chih)	1488-1505
Wuzong (Wu-tsung)	Zhu Houzhaoh (Chu Hou-chao)	Zhengde (Cheng-te)	1506-1521
Shizong (Shih-tsung)	Zhu Houzhong (Chu Hou-tsung)	Jiajing (Chia-ching)	1522-1566
Muzong (Mu-tsung)	Zhu Zaihou (Chu Tsai-hou)	Longqing (Lung-ch'ing)	1567-1572
Shenzong (Shen-tsung)	Zhu Yijun (Chu I-chün)	Wanli (Wan-li)	1573-1620
Guangzong (Kuang-tsung)	Zhu Changluo (Chu Ch'ang-lo)	Taichang (T'ai-ch'ang)	1620
Xizong (Hsi-tsung)	Zhu Yuxiao (Chu Yu-hsiao)	Tianqi (T'ien-ch'i)	1621-1627
Sizong (Ssu-tsung)	Zhu Yujian (Chu Yu-chien)	Chongzhen (Ch'ung-chen)	1628-1644

1. Resumed Government.

# Chart 18

## Qing Dynasty 1644-1911

Emperor	Personal Name	Era Name ( <i>nianhao</i> )	Dates
Shizuzhang (Shih-tsu-chang)	Aixinjue Luo Fulin (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo Fu-lin)	Shunzhi (Shun-chih)	1644-1661
Shengzuren (Sheng-tsu-jen)	Aixinjue Luo Xuanye (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo Hsuan-yeh)	Kangxi (K'ang-hsi)	1662-1722
Shizongxian (Shih-tsung-hsien)	Aixinjue Luo Yinzhen (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo Yin-chen)	Yongzheng (Yung-cheng)	1723-1735
Gaozongzhun (Kao-tsung-chun)	Aixinjue Luo Hongli (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo Hung-li)	Qianlong (Ch'ien-lung)	1736-1795
Renzongrui (Jen-tsung-jui)	Aixinjue Luo Youyan (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo Yu-yen)	Jiaqing (Chia-ch'ing)	1796-1820
Xuanzongcheng (Hsüan-tsung-ch'eng)	Aixinjue Luo Munning (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo Min-ning)	Daoguang (Tao-kuang)	1821-1850
Wenzongxian (Wen-tsung-hsien)	Aixinjue Luo Yizhu (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo I-chu)	Xianfeng (Hsien-feng)	1851-1861
Muzongyi (Mu-tsung-yi)	Aixinjue Luo Zaishun (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo Tsai-shun)	Tongzhi (T'ung-chih)	1862-1874
Dezong (Te-tsung)	Aixinjue Luo Zaidian (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo Tsai-tien)	Guanxu (Kuang-hsü)	1875-1908
Xuantongdi (Hsüan-t'ung-ti)	Aixinjue Luo Puyi (Ai-hsin-chüeh Lo P'u-i)	Xuantong (Hsüan-t'ung)	1909-1911



## Chart 19

### The rDzogs chen Lineage of the rNying ma Sect

There are many rNying ma lineages that may be traced from the earliest days of Buddhism in Tibet. The rDzogs chen lineage is cited here simply as an example of a continuous heritage that might be used for the dating of paintings by identifying specific individuals who are depicted as part of a tradition of teachers. The following lineage follows Tulku Thondup, *The Tantric Tradition of the Nyingmapa* (Marion, Mass.: Buddhayana, 1984), 38-95.

#### *Dharmakāya*

Samantabhadra (Tib. Kun tu bzang po) [with Samantabhadrī, Samantabhadra is the progenitor of the teachings and the Ādi Buddha of the rNying ma teachings]

#### *Sambhogakāya*

Vajrasattva

Buddhas of the five families [*kulas*], that is, the Jina Buddhas

#### *Nirmāṇakāya*

1. Rang bzhin sprul sku (Natural [Svabhāva] *Nirmāṇakāya*)

These beings are Buddhas identical to the *sambhogakāya* of the five pure lands and are considered to be “half-*sambhogakāya* and half-*nirmāṇakāya*” (*phyed sprul longs sku*).

2. ‘Gro ‘dul sprul sku (Nirmāṇakāya Who Subdues Beings)

These are the Mānuṣi (mortal) Buddhas, all of whom perform the twelve deeds of the life of Śākyamuni Buddha. For the twelve deeds, see cat. no. 107.

3. sNa tshogs sprul sku (All Sorts [of] Nirmāṇakāya)

These are any form or object that instructs the Dharma, including human teachers, images, scriptures, and anything else that provides an individual with Buddhological instruction.

The teachers of the rDzogs chen method belong to the sNa tshogs sprul sku category:

1. Prahevajra or Pramodavajra (dGa’ rab rdo rje)

According to tradition, was born 166 years after the *parinirvāṇa*, or 615 B.C. based on the Tibetan system of dating. Hid the texts of this method in a cave near Bodh Gayā.

2. Acarya Mañjuśrīmitra (‘Jam dpal bshes gnyen)

From a vision of dGa’ rab rdo rje, received the texts that had been hidden by his predecessor.

3. Acarya Śrīśiṃha (dPal gyi seng ge)

4. Jñānasūtra (Ye shes mdo)

5. Vimalamitra (Dri med bshes gnyen)

Transmitted teachings to Tibet under Khri strong lde brtsan at bSam yas; goes to Wudai Shan.

6. Nyang Ting dzin bzang po (ninth century)

A minister under Khri strong lde brtsan.

NOTE: The following names are given in the phonetic rendering used by Tulku Thondup. It has not been possible to determine the correct Tibetan orthography for the names of many of the individuals. Therefore, for consistency, all names have been rendered phonetically.

7. Dro rin chen bar
8. Be lo dro wang chug
9. Ne ten dang ma lhun gyal (eleventh century)
10. Che tsun seng ge wang chug (eleventh-twelfth century)
11. Zhang ton tra shi dor je (1097-1167)
12. Sre nyi ma bum (1158-1213)
13. Guru Cho ber (1196-1255)
14. Thrul zhig sen ge gyab pa (thirteenth century)
15. Drup chen me long dor je (1243-1303)
16. Rig dzin ku ma ra dza (1266-1343)
17. Kun khyen long chen rab jam (1308-1363)  
Wrote more than 250 treatises.
18. Khe drup khyab dal lhun drup (fourteenth century)
19. Tul ku drag pa od zer (fourteenth century)
20. Thrul zhig sang gye won po (fourteenth century)
21. Gyal se da wa drag pa [fourteenth-fifteenth century]
22. Drup chen kun zang dor je [fifteenth-sixteenth century]
23. Kun ga gyal tshen pal zang (1497-1568)
24. Tul ku na tshog rang drol (1494-1560)
25. Tul ku ten dzin drag pa (1536-1597)
26. Tul ku do ngag ten dzin (1576-1628)
27. Rig dzin sang dag thrin ley lhun drup (1611-1662)
28. Min ling ter chen gyur med dor je (1646-1714)  
Built Min drol ling at Tra chi in 1676.
29. Lo chen Dharmasri (1654-1717/1718)
30. Gyal se rin chen nam gyal (born late seventeenth century)
31. U cho rab [seventeenth-eighteenth century?]
32. Drub wang Sriṇātha [eighteenth century?]
33. Kun khyen jig med ling pa (1729-1798)  
Collected the rNying ma tantras in twenty-five volumes.
34. Jig med thrin ley od zer (1745-1821)  
(First Dodrup Chen Rinpoche)  
Built Dza gya in Dza chu kha  
Built Dro don lhun drup at Shug chen tag go in Do Valley  
Built Pema kod tsa sum kha dro'i ling in Yar lung
35. Jig med phun tshog jung ne (nineteenth century)  
(Second Dodrup Chen Rinpoche)  
Built Dodrup Chen monastery in Tsang chen plain of Do Valley

## Chart 20

### bKa' gdams Lineage

(Extracted from the *Blue Annals*)<sup>1</sup>

There are two major lineages of the bKa' gdams sect:

1. Holders of the precepts (bKa' gdams gDams ngag pa)
2. bKa' gdams gZhung pa (not given in this summary)

#### I. Lineage of the bKa' gdams gDams ngag pas

##### A. Atiśa (?-1054)

##### B. 'Brom ston pa (1003-1065)

1. builds a *viḥāra* at sNye thang in 1055
2. goes to Rwa sgrengs in 1056
3. builds a shrine
4. during the lifetime of 'Brom not more than sixty ascetics resided at Rwa sgrengs
  - a. disciples, "three brothers"
    - 1) Po to pa Rin chen gsal (died 1105) went to Rwa sgrengs in 1058
    - 2) Phu chung pa gZhon nu rgyal mtshan (1031-1100), formerly a disciple of Atiśa, becomes his disciple
    - 3) sPyan snga Tshul khriṃs 'bar (1038-?), went to Rwa sgrengs in 1057; name means "attendant (to 'Brom)"
  - b. chief disciples
    - 1) Kyu ra gzhon nu 'od zer
    - 2) Lhab mi shes rab gung drung
    - 3) Ka ba rgya gar
    - 4) Rug pa'i zhang chen po
    - 5) Bran ka jo btsun
    - 6) Kam yung pa
    - 7) Yung pa ka skyog po
    - 8) Yol rdzong rnal 'byor pa
    - 9) sTon pa yon tan 'bar
    - 10) sGom pa Rin chen bla ma
    - 11) A mes sman rgan (=rNal 'byor A mes?)
    - 12) sGa sgom Ag tshoms
    - 13) sTon pa dbang phyug 'bar
    - 14) Pha rgan ldong ston
    - 15) Jo bo legs
    - 16) Kham pa Lung pa chen po
    - 17) the three brothers (see above) and others

'Brom ston's successors became the Abbots of Rwa sgrengs:

- C. rNal 'byor pa chen po (rNal 'byor A mes; 1015-1078) (became abbot in 1065, held position for 14 years)
- D. 'Dzeng dbang phyug rgyal mtshan (i.e., dGon pa pa; 1016-1082); became abbot in 1078 and held position for 5 years
  1. disciples, especially "four sons of dGon" (a-d below)

- a. sNe'u zur pa (see below); founds sNe'u Zur monastery (lineage below)
  - b. Zhang ka ma pa
  - c. gNyan sna me ba
  - d. 'Bre ko de lung pa
  - e. Kha rag sgom chung
  - f. Po to pa
- E. No abbot of Rwa sgrengs, but "several nominal abbots"  
(*Blue Annals* seems to suggest much infighting)
- [1. 'Od jo (no dates given)]
  - [2. Gur ston (no dates given)]
  - [3. rMa ston pa (no dates given); "held chair for a long time"]
  - [4. Shes skor ba (no dates given); "held chair a long time"]
  - [5. 'Dul ba 'dzin pa (no dates given); "labored for a long time as a scholar"]
  - [6. 'Jam dbyangs pa (no dates given); "acted as abbot for many years"]
- F. dGon pa pa
- G. Po to ba at sTag lung
- H. sNe'u zur pa (1042-1118)
- 1. Acala is his *yi dam*
  - 2. believed to be an incarnation of Samantabhadra
  - 3. built Ne'u zur monastery in 'Phan yul (site no longer known?)
  - 4. taught:
    - a. *lam rim*
    - b. *bsTan rim chen mo*  
(Tsong kha pa's *lam rim* is patterned on this)
  - 5. [major] disciples there (ca. 1000)
    - Jo stan nag po of Tsha rong
    - Ka ba dar seng
    - Rin chen sgang pa chen po
    - gTsang-ston, two individuals (the First and Second)
    - gNyal pa me
    - Bur pa yul sman
    - dbUs ston chung
    - mNga' gsal dan
    - Dum bu ri pa
    - Zla ba rgyal mtshan
    - Rin can pa
    - rTsibs dgon pa
    - Byang chub dge mdzes of mNga' ris
    - sNubs sgom of gTsang rong
    - Myang stod pa
    - Brang song pa
    - War pad ma
    - Nyi phug pa



Zhang chung pa  
 rGyang dkar ba  
 Dar brtson of rGyang rong  
 rDzil 'od grags  
 Dar blo of Stod lungs  
 Mal gro bkra shis sgang pa  
 gLan chu  
 Mig lun ngu ba  
 Phyi ling bar  
 Gya pa  
 Tshul khirms 'od zer  
 two dGyer sgom chen-po; uncle and nephew  
 6. in gTsang his disciples were:  
 Drang po lung pa  
 sPyi bo lhas pa

sNe'u zur pa's successors became the Abbots of sNe'u Zur:

1. dGyer sgom chen po (1090-1171)  
(assumed chair at 29 in 1119/20; built Rin chen sgang monastery)
2. dbOn ston Rin po che (1138-1210)  
(held chair 42 years)
3. Sangs rgyas yon tan (Sang yon pa; 1181-1242)  
(held chair 32 years and died at 61)
4. bDe gshegs chen po (1202-1267)  
(held chair 25 years and died at 65)
5. gZhon nu 'bum of sKam dgon (1201-1269)  
(held chair for 18 months and died at 68)
6. Sangs rgyas 'od byung (1233-1294)  
(held chair for 25 years and died at 61)
7. Sangs rgyas gzhon 'od (1276-1336)  
(held chair for 42 years and died at 60)
8. Dharmasvāmin bKras rgyal ba (bKra shis rgyal mtshan; 1283-1344)  
(held chair for 8 years and died at 61)
9. sPyan snga pa (1272-1345)  
(held chair for 1 year and died at 73)
10. gZhon nu seng ge ba (1315-1346)  
(held chair for 1 year and died at 31)
11. Dharmasvāmin bSod rgyal ba (bSod nams rgyal mtshan); (1312-1367)  
(held chair for 21 years and died at 55)
12. Sang yon pa (Sangs rgyas yon tan; 1317-1372)  
(held chair for 5 years and died at 55)

(Chair remained empty for four years, 1373-1376.)

13. Sangs yas byang chub pa (1340-1396)  
(held chair for 21 years and died at 56)
14. sPyan snga Kun blo ba (1348-1407)  
(held chair for 11 years and died at 59)
15. sPyan snga gzhon 'od pa (alive in 1450 at about age 56 or older)  
(“has held the chair for 36 years and the year is 1450”)  
[This date of 1450 gives an unresolvable seven-year discrepancy in the total number of years.]

1. As given in various sections of the *Blue Annals*. See George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), especially 266 ff. and 311ff.

## Chart 21

### Sa skya Lineage

(Extracted from the *Blue Annals*)

1. 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po (1034-1102)

(founded Sa skya monastery in 1073, held chair 1073-1102)

2. Ba ri Lo tsa ba (held chair 1102-1112)

3. Kun dga' snying po (held chair 1112-1158)

4. Grags pa rgyal mtshan (held chair 1172-1216)

5. Sa skya Paṇ chen (chair 1216 [?]-1251 [?])  
visits China in 1244

[6. 'Phags pa (chair {and Dishi} 1251-1280)]

[7. Rin chen rgyal mtshan  
chair {Dishi} 1280-1281]

8. unnamed son of Phyag na  
Dharmapālaraksita (1268-1287)  
(chair from 1281-1287)

[9. Grag pa 'od zer  
(Dishi for eighteen years [1287-1305])]

10. Mahātma bZang po dpal (a son of Ye shes  
'byung gnas)(1262-1322); chair 1306-1322 [but  
not Dishi according to Cassinelli and Ekvall]

Son of 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po  
Sa chen Kun dga' snying po  
(1092-1158)

Sons of Kun dga' snying po  
1) Kun dga' 'bar (died in India at 22)  
2) bSod nams rtse mo (1142-1182)  
3) Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147-1216)  
4) dPal chen 'od po (1150-1203)

Sons of dPal chen 'od po  
1) Kun dga' rgyal mtshan(1182-1251),  
who becomes Sa skya Paṇ chen  
2) Zangs tsha bsod nams rgyal mtshan  
(1184-1239)

Sons of Zangs tsha bsod nams  
1) La ma 'Phags pa (1235-1280)  
accompanies Sa skya Paṇ chen to  
China; stays until 1265; returns  
again in 1268-1276  
2) Phyag na Dharmapālaraksita  
(1239-1267) accompanies Sa skya  
paṇ chen to China  
3) Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1238-?  
[1281 or 1282])  
4) Ye shes 'byung gnas (1238-1274)  
(son of a servant woman)

Based on information contained in George N. Roerich,  
*The Blue Annals*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of  
Bengal, 1949), 216ff; and C. W. Cassinelli and Robert B.  
Ekvall, *A Tibetan Principality: The Political System of Sa  
skya* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969),  
10-19.

It is unclear in the *Blue Annals* who succeeds Sa skya Paṇ  
chen. Cassinelli and Ekvall state that 'Phags pa succeeded  
his uncle as Dishi (Imperial Preceptor). "Chair" and  
"Dishi" seem to be equivalent titles in the sense that the  
Dishi and the "chairs" of Sa skya parallel each other for the  
duration of Mongol support.

With the extensive progeny—twelve sons and  
several daughters—of this chair, the cohesive  
rule of the Sa skya pas came to an end.

# Select Bibliography

- Arts of Bengal: The Heritage of Bangladesh and Eastern India*. London: White Chapel Art Gallery, 1979.
- Asher, Frederick M. "The Former Broadley Collection, Bihar Sharif." *Artibus Asiae* 32, nos. 2-3 (1970): 105-124.
- Asher, Frederick M. *The Art of Eastern India, 300-800*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980.
- Aung-Thwin, Michael. *Pagan: The Origins of Modern Burma*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985.
- Backus, Charles. *The Nan-chao kingdom and T'ang China's southwestern frontier*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Bandyopadhyay, Bimal. *Metal Sculptures of Eastern India*. Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1981.
- Banerjea, Jitendra Nath. *The Development of Hindu Iconography*. 2nd ed. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1956 (1st ed. 1941).
- Banerji, Rakhal Das. *The Pālas of Bengal*. Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal 5, no. 3. Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1915; reprint, Varanasi: Bhartiya Publishing House, 1973.
- Banerji, Rakhal Das. *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*. Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, vol. 47. Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933.
- Banerji-Sastri, Ananta Prasad. "Ninety-three Inscriptions on the Kurkihar Bronzes." *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 26, no. 3 (Sept. 1940): 236-251, 299-308.
- Bangdel, Lain S. *The Early Sculptures of Nepal*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982.
- Bartholomew, Richard. "Tibetan Thangkas." *Times of India Annual* (1967): 29-38.
- Barua, Benimadhab. *Gayā and Buddha-Gayā*. 2 vols. Calcutta: Chuckervetty Chatterjee and Co., 1931-1934; reprint, Varanasi, 1975.
- Barua, Dipak Kumar. *Buddha Gaya Temple: Its History*. Buddha Gaya: Buddha Gaya Temple Management Committee, 1975; 2nd ed., 1981.
- Basak, Radhagovinda, and Bhattacharya, Dinesh Chandra. *A Catalogue of the Relics in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi*. Rajshahi: Varendra Research Society, 1919.
- Beal, Samuel. *The Romantic Legend of Śākya Buddha: A Translation of the Chinese Version of the Abhinīṣkramaṇasūtra*. London: Trübner and Co., 1875; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985.
- Beal, Samuel. *Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629)*. 2 vols. London: Trübner and Co., 1884; reprint, Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1969.
- Beal, Samuel. *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang by the Shaman Hwui Li*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911, 2nd ed., New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1973.
- Bechert, Heinz, and Gombrich, Richard, eds. *The World of Buddhism: Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1984.
- Béguin, Gilles. *Dieux et démons de l'Himālaya: Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque*. Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977.
- Bernet-Kempers, August Johan. *The Bronzes of Nalanda and Hindu-Javanese Art*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1933.



- Bernet-Kempers, August Johan. *Ancient Indonesian Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Bhattacharyya, Benoytosh. *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, Mainly Based on the Sādhnamālā and Other Cognate Tantric Texts of Rituals*. Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968.
- Bhattacharyya, Dipak Chandra. *Tantric Buddhist Iconographic Sources*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1974.
- Bhattacharyya, Dipak Chandra. *Studies in Buddhist Iconography*. Delhi: Manohar, 1978.
- Bhattacharya, Nalini Kanta. *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*. Dacca: Dacca Museum Committee, 1929.
- Boisselier, Jean. *The Heritage of Thai Sculpture*. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1975.
- Broadley, Alexander Meyrick. "The Buddhistic Remains of Bihār." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 41, no. 3 (1872): 209-312; *Asiatic Society of Bengal, Proceedings* (1872): 119-120; reprint, Varanasi: Bharati Prakashan, 1979.
- Brown, Robert L. "Bodhgaya and South-East Asia." In Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment*. Bombay: Mārg, 1988, 101-124.
- bSod nams rgya mtsho, Ngor Thar rtse mkhan po. *Tibetan Maṇḍalas: The Ngor Collection*. 2 vols. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983.
- Buchanan, Susan Locher. *A Study of Pāla Patronage*. M. A. thesis, The Ohio State University, 1975.
- Buddhism in Northern Thailand*. The 13th Conference of The World Fellowship of Buddhists, 24-29 November 1980 at Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai: The World Fellowship of Buddhists, 1980.
- Casey, Jane Anne, ed. [see also Singer, Jane Casey]. *Medieval Sculpture from Eastern India: Selections from the Nalin Collection*. Lunenburg, Vermont: Steinhour Press, 1985.
- Chakravarti, Adhir. "Indianization of South East Asia—A Re-examination." In *Dīnēśa-Vandanā: D. C. Sircar Commemoration Volume*, ed. Samaresh Bandyopadhyay. *Journal of Ancient Indian History* 15, nos. 1-2 (1985-1986): 229-261.
- Chan, Albert. *The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1982.
- Chanda, Rama Prasad. *A Guide-Book to the Exhibition of Relics of Antiquity and Manuscripts*. Rajshahi: Varendra Research Society, 1912.
- Chandra, Lokesh. *Buddhist Iconography*. 2 vols., rev. and enl. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1987.
- Chapin, Helen B. "Yünnanese Images of Avalokiteśvara." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8 (1944-1945): 131-186.
- Chatterji, Bijan Raj. *Indian Cultural Influence in Cambodia*. 2nd ed. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1964.
- Chattopadhyaya, Alaka. *Atiśa and Tibet*. With translation by Lama Chimpa. Calcutta: Indian Studies Past and Present, 1967.
- Chaudhary, Radha Krishna. *Select Inscriptions of Bihar*. Patna: Shanti Devi, 1958.
- Chaudhuri, K. N. *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Chimpa, Lama, and Chattopadhyaya, Alaka, trans. *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, ed. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1970.
- Chowdhury, Abdul Momin. *Dynastic History of Bengal (c.750-1200 A.D.)*. Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1967.
- Clark, Walter Eugene. *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corporation, 1965 (1st ed. 1937).
- Coëdes, George. "Note sur une stèle Indienne d'époque Pāla découverte à Ayudhya (Siam)." *Artibus Asiae* 22, nos. 1-2 (1959): 9-14.
- Coëdes, George. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella and trans., Susan Brown Cowing. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968.
- Copeland, Carolyn. *Tankas from the Koelz Collection*. Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia 18. Ann

- Arbor: The University of Michigan, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1980.
- Cunningham, Alexander. *Mahâbodhi or the Great Buddhist Temple under the Bodhi Tree at Buddha-Gaya*. London: W. H. Allen, 1892; reprint, Varanasi: Indological Book House, n. d.
- Dagyab, Loden Sherap. *Tibetan Religious Art*. 2 vols. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977.
- Daniélou, Alain. *Hindu Polytheism*. Bollingen Series, no. 73. New York: Pantheon Books, 1964.
- Dargyay, Eva M. *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977.
- Das, Sarat Chandra. *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*. Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1893; reprint, Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1965.
- Das Gupta, Rajatananda. *Eastern Indian Manuscript Painting*. Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons and Co., 1972.
- Das Gupta, Shashibhusan. *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1958.
- Das Gupta, Shashibhusan. *Obscure Religious Cults*. 3rd ed. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969.
- Dehejia, Vidya. "Bodhgaya and Sri Lanka." In Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment*. Bombay: Mārg, 1988, 89-100.
- Dewa-samdub, Kazi, ed. *Shrīchakrasambhāra Tantra: A Buddhist Tantra*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1919; reprint, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1987.
- Diskul, (M. C.) Subhadradis, ed. *The Art of Śrīvijaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press and Paris: UNESCO, 1980.
- Dowman, Keith. *The Power-Places of Central Tibet: The Pilgrim's Guide*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988.
- Duroiselle, Charles. "The Stone Sculptures in the Ananda Temple at Pagan." *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1913-1914*. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1917, 63-97.
- Dutt, Sukumar. *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Their Contribution to Indian Culture*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962.
- Eastman, Alvan C. "Some Steles of the Pala Period Containing the Eight Miracles of Buddha with Notes on the Variations." *Art in America and Elsewhere* 18, no. 6 (Oct. 1930): 271-283; 19, no. 1 (Dec. 1930): 23-33.
- Edgren, Sören, et al. *Chinese Rare Books in American Collections*. New York: China House Gallery and China Institute in America, 1984.
- Eracle, Jean. *L'Art des Thanka et le Bouddhisme Tantrique: d'après les peintures du Musée d'ethnographie de Genève et quelques autres pièces*. Genève: Musée d'ethnographie, 1970.
- Ferrari, Alfonsa. *mK'yen brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*. Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 16. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958.
- Fickle, Dorothy H. *Images of the Buddha in Thailand*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Fontein, Jan; Soekmono, R.; and Suleiman, Satyawati. *Ancient Indonesian Art of the Central and Eastern Javanese Periods*. New York: The Asia Society, 1971.
- Fraser-Lu, Sylvia. "Buddha Images from Burma Part 1: Sculptured in Stone," *Arts of Asia* 11, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1981): 72-82.
- Fraser-Lu, Sylvia. "Buddha Images from Burma Part 2: Bronze and Related Metals," *Arts of Asia* 11, no. 2 (March-April 1981): 62-72.
- Fraser-Lu, Sylvia. "Buddha Images from Burma Part 3: Wood and Lacquer," *Arts of Asia* 11, no. 3 (May-June 1981): 129-136.
- Frédéric, Louis. *The Art of Southeast Asia: Temples and Sculpture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1965.
- Gega Lama. *Principles of Tibetan Art: Illustrations and explanations of Buddhist Iconography and iconometry according to the Karma Gardri School*. 2 vols. Darjeeling: Jamyang Singe, 1983.
- Ghosh, Amalananda. *Nalanda*. 5th ed. New Delhi, 1965. (Earlier editions called *A Guide to Nalanda*.)
- Ghosh, Mallar. *Development of Buddhist Iconography in Eastern India: A Study of Tārā, Prajñās of Five Tathāgatas and Bhṛikuṭi*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1980.

- Griswold, Alexander B. *Dated Buddha Images of Northern Siam*. Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1957.
- Griswold, Alexander B. "Notes on Siamese Art." *Artibus Asiae* 24, no. 1 (1961): 35-38.
- Griswold, Alexander B. "The Holy Land Transported: Replicas of the Mahābodhi Shrine in Siam and Elsewhere," in *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume on Art and Architecture and Oriental Studies*. Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1965, 173-221.
- Grousset, René. "L'Art Pāla et Sena dans l'Inde extérieure." In *Études d'orientalisme publiées par le Musée Guimet à la mémoire de Raymonde Linossier*. 2 vols., vol. 1: 277-285. Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1932.
- Gupta, Parmeshwari Lal, ed. *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities*. Patna: Patna Museum, 1965.
- Hall, D. G. E. *A History of South-East Asia*. 4th ed. London: Macmillan, 1987.
- Hall, Kenneth R. *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985.
- Haque, Enamul. *The Iconography of the Hindu Sculptures of Bengal, up to circa 1200 A.D.* Ph. D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1973.
- Hasrat, Bikrama Jit. *History of Nepal: As Told by Its Own and Contemporary Chroniclers*. Hoshiarpur, Punjab: V. V. Research Institute Press, 1970.
- Huntington, John C. *Styles and Stylistic Sources of Tibetan Painting*. Ph. D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1969.
- Huntington, John C. "The Iconography and Structure of the Mountings of Tibetan Paintings." *Studies in Conservation* 15 (1970): 190-205.
- Huntington, John C. "The Technique of Tibetan Paintings." *Studies in Conservation* 15 (1970): 122-133.
- Huntington, John C. "Three Essays on Himalayan Metal Images." *Apollo* 118, no. 261 (Nov. 1983): 416-425.
- Huntington, John C. "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism," part 1 [Lumbini and Bodhgayā], *Oriental Art* 16, no. 11 (Nov. 1985): 46-61; part 2 [Rāṣipatana Mṛgadāval, *Oriental Art* 17, no. 2 (Feb. 1986): 28-43; part 3 [Śrāvastī and Sāṅkāsya], *Oriental Art* 17, no. 3 (March 1986): 32-46; part 4, *Oriental Art* 17, no. 7 (July 1986): 28-40; part 5 [Kūśinagara, Appendices and Notes], *Oriental Art* 17, no. 9 (Sept. 1986): 46-58.
- Huntington, John C. "Pilgrimage as Image: the Cult of the Aṣṭamahāprātihārya," part 1, *Oriental Art* 18, no. 4 (April 1987): 55-63; part 2, *Oriental Art* 18, no. 8 (Aug. 1987): 56-68.
- Huntington, Susan L. "Some Bronzes from Fatehpur, Gaya." *Oriental Art* n. s. 25, no. 2 (Summer 1979): 240-247.
- Huntington, Susan L. "Pre-Pāla and Pāla Period Sculptures in the Rockefeller Collection." *Apollo* (Nov. 1983): 370-378.
- Huntington, Susan L. *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture*. Studies in South Asian Culture, vol. 10. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984.
- Huntington, Susan L., ed. *Archive of Bihar and Bengal Art*, part 1, *Buddhist and Hindu*. Leiden: Inter Documentation Company, forthcoming.
- Huntington, Susan L. with contributions by Huntington, John C. *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. Tokyo: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1985.
- Huntington, Susan L., and Huntington, John C. "Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy." *Oriental Art* 20, no. 10 (Oct. 1989): 26-46. [Also published separately to accompany the exhibition, with pages numbered from 2-22.]
- Jackson, David P., and Jackson, Janice A. *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods and Materials*. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala, 1984.
- Jayaswal, Kashi Prasad. "Metal Images of Kurkihar Monastery." *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* 2, no. 2 (Dec. 1934): 70-82.
- Jermasawadti, Promsak. *Thai Art with Indian Influences*. New Delhi: Abhinav, 1979.
- Karmay, Heather. *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*. Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1975.
- Khetsun Sangpo Rinbochay. *Tantric Practice in Nyingma*, ed. and trans. by Jeffrey Hopkins. Ithaca, N.Y.:

- Gabriel/Snow Lion, 1982.
- Klimburg-Salter, Deborah E., et al. *The Silk Route and The Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes*. Los Angeles: U.C.L.A. Art Council, 1982.
- Krairiksh, Piriya. *Das Heilige Bildnis: Skulpturen aus Thailand/The Sacred Image: Sculptures from Thailand*. Köln: Museen der Stadt, 1979.
- Krairiksh, Piriya. *Art in Peninsular Thailand Prior to the Fourteenth Century A.D.* Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, [1980].
- Kramrisch, Stella. "Pala and Sena Sculpture." *Rūpam* 40 (Oct. 1929): 107-126.
- Kramrisch, Stella. *The Art of Nepal*. New York: Asia Society, 1964.
- Krishna Deva. *Images of Nepal*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1984.
- Kuraishi, Muhammad Hamid. *A Short Guide to the Buddhist Remains Excavated at Nalanda*. Calcutta: Government of India, Central Publications Branch, 1931.
- Kvaerne, Per. *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs: A Study of the Caryāgīti*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977.
- Lauf, Detlef Ingo. *Tibetan Sacred Art: The Heritage of Tantra*. Berkeley and London: Shambhala, 1976.
- Lauf, Detlef Ingo. *Verborgene Botschaft Tibetischer Thangkas (Secret Revelation of Tibetan Thangkas: Picture Meditation and Interpretation of Lamaist Cult Paintings)*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Aurum Verlag GmbH and Co. KG, 1976.
- Le May, Reginald. "The Chronology of Northern Siamese Buddha Images." *Oriental Art* n. s., 1, no. 1 (Spring 1955): 17-22.
- Le May, Reginald. *A Concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938; 2nd ed., Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1963.
- Lee, Sherman E., and Ho, Wai-kam. *Chinese Art Under the Mongols*. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968.
- Legshay Gyatsho, Thubten. *Gateway to the Temple: Manual of Tibetan Monastic Customs, Art, Building and Celebrations*. Bibliotheca Himalayica, 3rd series, vol. 12. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1979.
- Leoshko, Janice. *The Iconography of Buddhist Sculptures of the Pāla and Sena Periods from Bodhgayā*. Ph. D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1987.
- Leoshko, Janice, ed. *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment*. Bombay: Mārg, 1988.
- Leoshko, Janice. "The Vajrasana Buddha." In Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment*. Bombay: Mārg, 1988, 29-44.
- Leoshko, Janice. "The Case of the Two Witnesses to the Buddha's Enlightenment," in *A Pot-Pourri of Indian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal. Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1988: 39-52.
- Lessing, Ferdinand Diedrich. *Yung-ho-kung: An Iconography of the Lamaist Cathedral in Peking with Notes on Lamaist Mythology and Cult*. Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, vol. 1 (no further volumes published). Stockholm: [Statens Etnografiska Museum], 1942.
- Li Lin-ts'an. *A Study of the Nan-Chao and Ta-Li Kingdoms in the Light of Art Materials found in Various Museums*. Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1982.
- Liebert, Gösta. *Iconographic Dictionary of the Hindu Religions, Buddhism-Hinduism-Jainism*. Studies in South Asian Culture, vol. 5. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976.
- Locke, John K. *Karunamaya: The Cult of Avalokitesvara—Matsyendranath in the Valley of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Sahayogi Prakashan for the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, 1980.
- Lohuizen-de Leeuw, J. E. van. "The 'Stone Buddha' of Chiangmai and its Inscription." *Artibus Asiae* 24, nos. 3-4 (1961): 324-329.
- [Losal], Jamyang. *New-Sun Self-Learning Book on the Art of Tibetan Painting (Bod kyi ri mo 'bri tshul deb gsar kun phan nyi ma)*. Happy Valley, Mussoorie, Uttar Pradesh: Tibetan Home's Foundation, 1982.
- Losty, Jeremiah P. *The Art of the Book in India*. London: The British Library, 1982.



- Losty, Jeremiah P. "Bengal, Bihar, Nepal? Problems of Provenance in 12th-century Illuminated Buddhist manuscripts, Part One." *Oriental Art* 35, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 86-96; Part Two, *Oriental Art* 35, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 140-149.
- Lowry, John. "Tibet, Nepal or China? An Early Group of Dated *Tangkas*." *Oriental Art* n. s. 19, no. 3 (Autumn 1973): 306-315.
- Lowry, John. *Tibetan Art*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1973.
- Lowry, John. *Burmese Art*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1974.
- Lowry, John. "A Fifteenth Century Sketchbook (Preliminary Study)." In *Essais sur l'Art du Tibet*, ed. Ariane MacDonald and Yoshiro Imaeda. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1977.
- Luce, Gordon H. *Old Burma-Early Pagán*, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 25, 3 vols. Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin for Artibus Asiae and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1969-1970.
- Luce, Gordon H. "Sources of Early Burma History." In C. D. Cowan and O. W. Wolters, eds., *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D. G. E. Hall* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976): 31-42.
- Luce, Gordon H. *Phases of Pre-Pagán Burma*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Macdonald, Alexander W., and Stahl, Anne Vergati. *Newar Art: Nepalese Art During the Malla Period*. Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1979.
- Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra. *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*. Lahore: Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot, 1927.
- Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra, ed. *The History of Bengal*, vol. 1, *The Hindu Period*. Dacca: University of Dacca, 1943; unauthorized reprint, Dacca: University of Dacca, n. d.; reprint of unauthorized reprint, Patna: N. V. Publications, 1971; reprinted, with some changes, as *History of Ancient Bengal*, Calcutta: G. Bharadwaj and Co., 1971.
- Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra. *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*. 2nd ed. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963 (1st ed. 1944).
- Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra. *Ancient Indian Colonization in South-East Asia*. The Maharāja Sayajirao Gaekwad Honorary Lecture, 1953-1954. Baroda: Maharāja Sayajirao University of Baroda Press, 1955; 2nd ed., 1963.
- Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra, ed. *The Struggle for Empire: The History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. 5. 2nd ed. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966.
- Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra; Basak, Radhagovinda; and Banerji, Nanigopal. *Rāmacaritaṃ of Sandhyākaranandin*. Rajshahi: Varendra Research Society, 1939.
- Majupuria, Trilok Chandra, and Majupuria, Indra. *Erotic Themes of Nepal (An analytical study and interpretations of religion-based sex expressions misconstrued as pornography)*. 2nd ed. Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal: S. Devi, 1980-1981.
- Mallman, Marie-Therese de. *Introduction à l'iconographie du tântrisme bouddhique*. Bibliothèque du Centre de recherches sur l'Asie Centrale et la Haute Asie. Paris: 1975.
- Marcus, Margaret F. "Sculptures from Bihar and Bengal." *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Oct. 1967): 240-262.
- Mārg 27, no. 2 (1974). [Volume bears also separate title, *Heritage of Bangladesh*.]
- Martin, Montgomery, ed. *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India, Comprising the Districts of Behar, Shahabad, Bhagulpoor, Goruckpoor, Dinajepoor, Puraniya, Rungpoor, and Assam*. 3 vols. London: William H. Allen and Co., 1836-1838; reprint in 5 vols., Delhi, 1976.
- Meisezahl, Richard O. *Geist und Ikonographie des Vajrayāna-Buddhismus: Hommage à Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann*. Sankt Augustin: Wissenschaftsverlag, 1980.
- Mitra, Debala. *Bronzes from Bangladesh: A Study of Buddhist images from District Chittagong*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1982.
- Mitra, Rajendralala. *Buddha Gaya, the Great Buddhist Temple, the Hermitage of Sakya Muni*. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1878; reprint Delhi: Indological Book House, 1972.

- Mitra, Sisir Kumar, ed. *East Indian Bronzes*. Calcutta: Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University, 1979.
- Mookerji, Radha Kumud. *A History of Indian Shipping*. Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1962.
- Mukherjee, B. N. *East Indian Art Styles, A Study in Parallel Trends*. Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi, 1980.
- Mukherji, R. R., and Maity, S. K. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions Bearing on History and Civilization of Bengal*. Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1967.
- Mukherji, S. C. *A Study of Vaisnavism in Ancient and Medieval Bengal—upto the Advent of Caitanya (Based on Archaeological and Literary Data)*. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1966.
- Mukhopadhyay, Santipriya. *Amitābha and His Family*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1985.
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966.
- Nath, Birendra. *Nalanda Murals*. New Delhi: Cosmo, 1983.
- Naudou, J.; Stern, Ph.; and Picron, Claudine. "La stèle Pāla-Sena: evolution et chronologie." In *Au Service d'une biologie de l'art*, 2 vols. Publications de l'Université de Lille, no. 3 [Lille], 1978, vol. 1, 57-97.
- Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Réne de. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*. 'S-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1956.
- Obermiller, E., trans. *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung) by Bu-ston. Part 1 The Jewelry of Scripture*. Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismus, ed. M. Walleser. Heidelberg: Otto Harrassowitz, 1931; *Part 2 The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*. Heidelberg: Otto Harrassowitz, 1932; reprint, 2 vols. in 1, Suzuki Research Foundation, Reprint Series 5, n.p., Showa 39 [1965].
- O'Connor, Stanley J., Jr. *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam*. Artibus Asiae Supplementum 28. Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1972.
- Olschak, Blanche Christine, and Wangyal, Geshé Thupten. *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.
- Olson, Eleanor. *Catalog of the Tibetan Collection and other Lamaist Articles in the Newark Museum*. 5 vols. Newark, New Jersey: Newark Museum, 1950, 1961, 1971.
- Olson, Eleanor. *Tantric Buddhist Art*. New York: China House Gallery, 1974.
- Oort, H. A. van. *The Iconography of Chinese Buddhism in Traditional China*. 2 vols. Iconography of Religions, 5, nos. 1 and 2. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986.
- Pal, Pratapaditya. *The Art of Tibet*. New York: The Asia Society, 1969.
- Pal, Pratapaditya. *The Arts of Nepal*. 2 vols. Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1974-1978.
- Pal, Pratapaditya. *Nepal: Where the Gods are Young*. New York and Tokyo: The Asia Society in association with John Weatherhill, 1975.
- Pal, Pratapaditya. *Art of Tibet: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, 1983.
- Pal, Pratapaditya. *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thankas Eleventh to Nineteenth Centuries*. Basel: Ravi Kumar, 1984.
- Pal, Pratapaditya. *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*. Los Angeles and Berkeley: The Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with the University of California Press, [1985].
- Pal, Pratapaditya, and Meech-Pekarik, Julia. *Buddhist Book Illuminations*. New York and Paris: Ravi Kumar and Richard Lyon-Chimera Books, [1988].
- Pala Art* [exhibition brochure by Wayne E. Begley]. Iowa [1969].
- Pāla Stone Sculpture*, brochure for an exhibition held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, January 23-April 10, 1984.
- Pathak, S. K., ed. *The Album of the Tibetan Art Collections (Collected by Pt. [Paṇḍit] Rahula Samkṛityayana from the Nor, Zhalu and other Monasteries in 1928-29 and 1934)*. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1986.

- Patil, D. R. *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1963.
- Paul, Pramode Lal. *The Early History of Bengal from the Earliest Times to the Muslim Conquest*. 2 vols. Indian Research Institute Publication, Indian History Series, 2-3. Calcutta: Indian Research Institute, 1939-1940.
- Petech, Luciano. *Mediaeval History of Nepal*. Serie Orientale Roma 10, Materials for the Study of Nepalese History and Culture, 3. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958.
- Rao, T. A. Gopinatha. *Elements of Hindu Iconography*. Madras: Law Printing House, 1914-1916; reprint, 2 vols. in 4, New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1968.
- Raverty, H. G., trans. *Tabakāt-i-Nāsirī: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan; from A.H. 194 (810 A.D.) to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.) and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam by Maulānā, Minhāj-ud-dīn, Abū-'Umar-i-'Usmān*. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1881; reprint, 2 vols., New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1970.
- Ray, Nihar Ranjan. *Brahmanical Gods in Burma (A Chapter of Indian Art and Iconography)*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1932.
- Ray, Nihar Ranjan. *Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma*. Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1936.
- Ray, Nihar Ranjan; Khandalavala, Karl; and Gorakshkar, Sadashiv. *Eastern Indian Bronzes*. Bombay: Lalit Kālā Akademi, 1986.
- Reynolds, Valrae. *Tibet: A Lost World: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography*. New York: The American Federation of Arts, 1978.
- Reynolds, Valrae, and Heller, Amy. *Catalog of The Newark Museum Tibetan Collection*, vol. 1, *Introduction*. Newark, New Jersey: The Newark Museum, 1983.
- Reynolds, Valrae; Heller, Amy; and Gyatso, Janet. *Catalogue of the Newark Museum Tibetan Collection*, vol. 3, *Sculpture and Painting*. Newark, New Jersey: The Newark Museum, 1986.
- Rockhill, W. Woodville. *The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order, derived from Tibetan Works in the Bkah-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. Ltd., 1907.
- Roerich, George N. *Tibetan Paintings*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, Paul Geuthner, 1925.
- Roerich, George N. *The Blue Annals*. 2 vols. Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal Monograph Series, 7, pts. 1-2. Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1949-1953; reprint, 2 vols. in 1, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979.
- Roerich, George N., trans. *Biography of Dharmasvāmin (Chag lo tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal), A Tibetan Monk Pilgrim*. Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1959.
- Sankalia, Hasmukh D. *The University of Nalanda*. Madras: B. G. Paul and Co., 1934; 2nd ed., Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1972.
- Saṅkṛityāyana, Rahula. "Sanskrit Palm-Leaf Manuscripts in Tibet." *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 21 (1935): 21-43.
- Saṅkṛityāyana, Rahula. "Second Search for Palm-Leaf Manuscripts in Tibet." *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 23, no. 1 (1937): 1-57.
- Saraswati, Sarasi Kumar, and Sarkar, Kshitish Chandra. *Kurkihar, Gaya and Bodh Gaya*. With "A Note on the Metal Images" by Stella Kramrisch. Rajshahi, 1936.
- Saraswati, Sarasi Kumar. *Early Sculpture of Bengal*. 2nd ed. Calcutta: Sambodhi Publications, 1962.
- Saraswati, Sarasi Kumar. "East Indian Manuscript Painting." In *Chhavi, Golden Jubilee Volume. Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1920-1970*, ed. Anand Krishna. Banaras: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1971, 243-262.
- Saraswati, Sarasi Kumar. *Architecture of Bengal, Book I (Ancient Phase)*. Calcutta: G. Bharadwaj and Co., 1976.
- Saraswati, Sarasi Kumar. *Tantrayāna Art, An Album*. Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1977.
- Sarkar, Himansu Bhusan. "The Cultural Contact between Java and Bengal." *Indian Historical Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1937): 589-599.
- Sarkar, Himansu Bhusan. "The Eastern School of Art and its Impact on Ancient Burma and Indonesia: A Brief Survey." *Journal of Indian History* 49 (1971): 79-89.
- Sarkar, Himansu Bhusan. "Bengal and Her Traffic-Routes

- in the Bay of Bengal and South-East Asia. (c. 300 B.C.-300 A.D.)." *Journal of the Asiatic Society* [Bengal; 4th series] 14, nos. 2-4 (1972): 74-89.
- Sarkar, Himansu Bhusan. "Export and Import Trade of Bengal (c. 300 B.C.-800 A.D.)." *Journal of the Asiatic Society* [Bengal; 4th series] 15, nos. 1-4 (1973): 177-198.
- Sarkar, Himansu Bhusan. "Bengal and Her Overland Routes in India and Beyond." *Journal of the Asiatic Society* [Bengal; 4th series] 16 (1974): 92-119.
- Sastri, Haraprasad, ed. *Rāmacaritam of Sandyākaranandin*. Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 3, no. 1. Calcutta, 1910. Revised, with English translation and notes by Radhagovinda Basak. Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1969.
- Sastri, Hirananda. *Nalanda and Its Epigraphical Material*. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 66. Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1942.
- Schafer, Edward H. *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.
- Scheurleer, Pauline Lunsingh, and Klokke, Marijke J. *Ancient Indonesian Bronze Art. Indo-Javanese Bronzes from Dutch Collections*. [See Scheurleer, Pauline Lunsingh, and Klokke, Marijke J. *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A.D. 600 to 1600*.]
- Scheurleer, Pauline Lunsingh, and Klokke, Marijke J. *Divine Bronze: Ancient Indonesian Bronzes from A.D. 600 to 1600*. Catalogue of the Exhibition organised in collaboration with the Society of Friends of Asiatic Art held in the Department of Asiatic Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30-July 31, 1988. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988. [Simultaneously published in hardcover under the title *Ancient Indonesian Bronze Art. Indo-Javanese Bronzes from Dutch Collections*.]
- Schmid, Toni. *The Eighty-five Siddhas*. Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, publication no. 42. Stockholm: Statens Etnografiska Museum, 1958.
- Schroeder, Ulrich von. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*. Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications Ltd., 1981.
- SEAMEO. (The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization [SEAMEO] has published a number of volumes relating to art and archaeology in Southeast Asia. Some of the volumes also bear the heading SPAFA [SEAMEO Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts]. Those volumes that are most pertinent to the topic of this exhibition and catalogue are listed below. Because these volumes may be difficult to obtain, ISBN or ISSN numbers have been included.)
- [SEAMEO.] *SPAFA Final Report. Workshop on Research on Srivijaya, Jakarta, March 12-17, 1979*. Jakarta: [SEAMEO], 1979.
- [SEAMEO.] *SEAMEO Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts. Final Report. Consultative Workshop on Archaeological and Environmental Studies on Srivijaya (I-W2A)*. Jakarta, Palembang, and Jambi, Indonesia, August 31-September 12, 1982. [ISBN 974-7809-03-6.]
- [SEAMEO.] *SPAFA Final Report. Consultative Workshop on Archaeological and Environmental Studies on Srivijaya (T-W3), Bangkok and South Thailand. March 29-April 11, 1983*. [ISBN 974-7809-04-4.]
- [SEAMEO.] *SPAFA Special Bibliographical Series, series 1 (Prehistory and Archaeology), vol. 2, no. 1 (1984)*. [ISSN 0125-6629.]
- [SEAMEO.] *SPAFA Final Report. Consultative Workshop on Research on Maritime Shipping and Trade Networks in Southeast Asia (I-W7)*. Cisarua, West Java, Indonesia, November 20-27, 1984. Bangkok: SPAFA Co-Ordinating Unit, 1984. [ISBN 974-7809-10-9.]
- [SEAMEO.] *SPAFA Final Report. Consultative Workshop on Archaeological and Environmental Studies on Srivijaya (I-W2b)*. Jakarta: [SEAMEO], 1985. [ISBN 974-7809-12-5.]
- [SEAMEO.] *SEAMEO Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts. Historical and Archaeological Sites and Monuments of Southeast Asia, A Compilation, vol. 1, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore*. Bangkok: SPAFA Library and Documentation Centre, 1986. [ISBN 974-7809-13-3.]
- [SEAMEO.] *SEAMEO Project in Archaeology and Fine Arts. Historical and Archaeological Sites and Monuments of Southeast Asia, A Compilation, vol. 2, Thailand*. Bangkok: SPAFA Library and Documentation Centre, 1987. [ISBN 974-7809-16-8.]
- [SEAMEO.] *SPAFA Annotated Bibliography on Srivijaya, vol. 1, no. 1*. Bangkok: SEAMEO, 1987. [ISBN 974-7809-21-4.]

- Shakabpa, Tsepon W. D. *Tibet: A Political History*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Singer, Jane Casey [see also Casey, Jane Anne]. "An Early Painting from Tibet." *Orientalism* 117, no. 7 (July 1986): 41-45.
- Singer, Jane Casey [see also Casey, Jane Anne]. "Bodhgaya and Tibet." In Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment*. Bombay: Mārg, 1988, 143-155.
- Sinha, Bindeshwari Prasad, ed. *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*. 1 vol. in 2 pts. Historical Research Series 12. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1973-1974.
- Sinha, Bindeshwari Prasad. *Dynastic History of Magadha, cir. 450-1200 A.D.* New Delhi: Abhinav, 1977.
- Slusser, Mary Shepherd. *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Slusser, Mary Shepherd. "Bodhgaya and Nepal." In Janice Leoshko, ed., *Bodhgaya, the Site of Enlightenment*. Bombay: Mārg, 1988, 125-142.
- Smith, Bardwell L., ed. *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos, and Burma*. Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima, 1978.
- Smith, E. Gene. "Introduction." *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture*. 3 vols. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1970.
- Snellgrove, David L. *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*. 2 vols. London Oriental Series, vol. 6. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Snellgrove, David L. *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*. 2 vols. Boston: Shambhala, 1987.
- Snellgrove, David, and Richardson, Hugh. *A Cultural History of Tibet*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968.
- Snellgrove, David L., and Skorupski, Tadeusz. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, vol. 1, *Central Ladakh*. Boulder, Colorado: Prajñā Press, 1977; vol. 2, *Zangskar and the Cave Temples of Ladakh*. Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1980.
- SPAFA volumes. See SEAMEO.
- Stadtner, Donald M. "King Dhammaceti's Pegu." *Orientalism* 21, no. 2 (Feb. 1990): 53-60.
- Strachan, Paul. *Pagan: Art and Architecture of Old Burma*. Whiting Bay, Arran, U.K.: Kiscadale Publishing, 1989.
- Takakusu, J., trans. *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671-695) by I-Tsing*. London: The Clarendon Press, 1896; reprint, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1966.
- Tambiah, Stanley J. "Famous Buddha Images and the Legitimation of Kings." *Res* 4 (Autumn 1982): 5-19.
- Tarthang Tulku, Rinpoche. *Sacred Art of Tibet*. Berkeley: Tibetan Nyingma Meditation Center, Dharma Publishing, 1972.
- Trungpa, Chögyam Rinpoche. *Visual Dharma: The Buddhist Art of Tibet*. Berkeley and London: Shambhala, 1975.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. *Indo-Tibetica*. 4 vols. in 7 parts. Rome: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1932-1941.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*. 3 vols. Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. "A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style." *Artibus Asiae* 22, nos. 1-2 (1959): 179-187.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. *Rati-lilā: An Interpretation of the Tantric Imagery of the Temples of Nepal*. Geneva: Nagel Publishers, 1969.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. *The Religions of Tibet*, trans. Geoffrey Samuel. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1980.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. *Rin-chen-bzan-po and the Renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet Around the Millennium*. English translation of *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. 2, ed. Lokesh Chandra, first draft translation by Nancy Kipp Smith, under the direction of Thomas J. Pritzker. Śāta-Piṭaka Series, vol. 348. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. *Stupa: Art, Architectonics and Symbolism*. English translation of *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. 1, ed. Lokesh Chandra, trans. Uma Marina Vesci. Śāta-Piṭaka Series, vol. 347. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. *The Temples of Western Tibet and their Artistic Symbolism: The Monasteries of Spiti and*



- Kunavar. English translation of *Indo-Tibetica*, 3, pt. 1, ed. Lokesh Chandra, from a first draft translation by Uma Marina Vesci. Śata-Piṭaka Series, vol. 349. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988.
- Vaidya, Karunakar. *Buddhist Traditions and Culture of the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal)*. Kathmandu: Shajha Prakashan, 1986.
- Van Beek, Steve. *The Arts of Thailand*. Hong Kong: Travel Publishing Asia Limited, 1985.
- Waldschmidt, Ernst, and Waldschmidt, Rose Leonore, trans. by David Wilson. *Nepal: Art Treasures from the Himalayas*. London: Elek Books, 1969.
- Watters, Thomas A. *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and S. W. Bushell. London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1904-1905; reprint, Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1961.
- Wayman, Alex. *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism*. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973.
- Weiner, Sheila L. "From Gupta to Pala Sculpture." *Artibus Asiae* 25, nos. 2-3 (1962): 167-192.
- Wolters, O. W. "Śrīvijayan Expansion in the Seventh Century." *Artibus Asiae* 24, nos. 3-4 (1961): 417-424.
- Wolters, O. W. *Early Indonesian Commerce: A Study of the Origins of Śrīvijaya*. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967.
- Wolters, O. W. *The Fall of Śrīvijaya in Malay History*. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970.
- Zwalf, Waldimir. *Heritage of Tibet*. London: British Museum, 1981.
- Zwalf, Waldimir. ed. *Buddhism, Art and Faith*. London: British Museum Publications Limited for the Trustees of the British Museum, 1985.

# GLOSSARY

(Terms are in Sanskrit unless otherwise noted.)

*ābhaṅga*. "Bend." A standing posture with a slight bend in both the upper and lower halves of the body so that a plumb line from the top of the head to the point midway between the heels passes slightly to the right of the navel.

*abhaya mudrā*. A gesture of protection and reassurance (the granting of the "absence of fear") displayed by deities to their worshippers. The hand (usually the right) is held palm outward with the fingers pointing upward. In Buddhism it is used as a teaching gesture, for it is through the Buddhist teachings that the "absence of fear" (of death) is granted.

*ācārya*. One who observes (the rules of his religious order); a teacher or spiritual guide.

*ādarśa*. A mirror; an attribute sometimes held by female deities. Also known as *darpaṇa*. For symbolism, see cat. no. 18.

*ahimsā*. Without violence; nonviolence; the doctrine of non-injury to living beings practiced by members of many Indic religious sects.

*akṣamālā*. A string of recitation beads used for counting repetitions of *mantras* or prayers. Sometimes simply called *mālā*.

*ālīḍha*. "Jumping." A standing posture in which the deity is shown actively posed, sometimes trampling upon an enemy, usually with one leg bent, the other stretched. The pose signifies heroism. See also *pratyālīḍha* and cat. no. 12.

*andagu*. The Myanmari (Burmese) name for a yellowish-beige pyrophyllite stone used as a carving medium for a number of images that have been found in Myanmar and elsewhere. See cat. nos. 61 and 62.

*añjali mudrā*. A gesture of respect and salutation in which the two hands are held together near the chest, palms touching.

*antarvāsaka*. An undercloth worn in skirtlike fashion around the hips and legs. One of the three garments (*tricīvara*) worn by Buddhist monks of the Pāli and some other schools of Buddhism. Often depicted as worn by Buddhas in art. See cat. no. 13 for discussion.

*anuttarayoga*. "Highest yoga." A system of Buddhist yogic meditational practice taught by some of the Mahāsiddhas and transmitted to Tibet. The meditations center on individually chosen deities (*iṣṭadevatā*).

*Anuttarayoginī-tantra*. A classification of Buddhist Tantric texts that emphasize the most esoteric teachings of the "mother" or female (*prajñā/śūnyatā*) tradition.

*ardhaparyāṅkāśana*. "Half-sitting posture." Usually, one leg is bent on the seat and the other hangs down loosely or is lightly supported by a foot pedestal.

*āsana*. Seat or throne; the leg positions or sitting postures assumed by deities and religious practitioners.

*aṣṭadhātu*. An alloy of eight metals believed to have been used in north Indian metal images.

*aṣṭamahābhaya*. Eight great perils. For a form of Tārā as protectress against the eight great perils see cat. no. 150.

*aṣṭamahāprātihārya*. Eight great illusory displays; the eight major life events of Śākyamuni Buddha.

*āśvattha*. A fig tree (Latin *Ficus religiosa*); the *bodhi* tree of Śākyamuni Buddha; a *pīṭha* tree. Its leaves are essentially heart-shaped and have an elongated drip tail or point.

*avatāra*. An incarnation (literally "descent") of a deity; generally used to refer to the ten major incarnations of the god Viṣṇu.

*bhadrāsana*. "Auspicious seat." A sitting posture in which the legs are pendent. Also known as *pralambapadāsana*, although *bhadrāsana* is the preferred term. See cat. no. 72.

*bhūmi*. "Earth." May refer to a floor, foundation, level, or stage. In Buddhist thought, the term refers to the stages (or spiritual spheres) through which a Bodhisattva (or practitioner) moves in quest of enlightenment. In architecture, the stories (of a building or superstructure).

*bhūmiśparśa mudrā*. "Earth-touching gesture." Characteristic of depictions of Śākyamuni Buddha in his victory over Māra. The right hand extends downward, palm inward, and touches (or reaches toward) the earth. Used only for seated figures.

*bimba*. "Image." Generally, the small image of a Buddha depicted in the crown or headdress of a Bodhisattva.

*bla ma* or *bla ma* (Tibetan; pronounced lama). A Lama. An honorific term meaning teacher (*guru*).

*bodhi*. In Buddhism, enlightenment; perfected knowledge or wisdom; the result of the unification of compassion (*karuṇā*) and wisdom (*prajñā*).

*bodhimaṇḍa*. Literally, circle of enlightenment. The spot at Bodh Gayā under the *bodhi* tree where Śākyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment.

*Bodhisattva*. "Enlightenment Being." A potential Buddha; a being destined to attain Buddhahood; a being capable of attaining Buddhahood, who serves as a guide to others on the Buddhist path. See also Mahāsattva Bodhisattva.

*bodhi tree (bodhivṛkṣa)*. Enlightenment tree; each mortal (Mānuṣi) Buddha became enlightened while meditating under a type of tree that came to be considered his "enlightenment tree." For a list of the different *bodhi* trees, see cat. no. 113, n. 3.

*bodhyaṅgī mudrā*. A hand gesture in which the index finger of the left hand is enclosed by the five fingers of the right, signifying the union of the five knowledges of the Jina Buddhas into the single enlightenment. See cat. no. 82 for alternative names and discussion.

*brāhmaṇa*. Member of the highest caste in Hinduism; a Hindu priest.

*bris* (Tibetan; pronounced ree). Drawn or written. Painting.

Buddha. An enlightened, omniscient being. May refer to mortal (Mānuṣi) beings (such as Śākyamuni Buddha) or those of the abstract, theoretical realms.

*cakra*. A wheel or discus. In Buddhism, the *cakra* refers to the wheel of the law (*dharmacakra*). In Hinduism, the *cakra* is a symbol (and weapon) of Viṣṇu.

*cakravartin*. Literally, "wheel turner." In Buddhism, the highest level of secular existence possible. By definition a secular individual who has the potential to become a Buddha. A universal monarch.

*caturviṃśatimūrti*. The twenty-four forms or aspects of Viṣṇu, which are recognized by the variant ways in which the god's four principal attributes are rotated among his hands.

*caurī*. A fly whisk. Sometimes held as an attribute in the hand of an attendant figure.

*chattra*. An umbrella or parasol. A symbol of royalty, protection, and honor.

*chos rten* (Tibetan; pronounced chorten). A *stūpa*.

*damaru*. A type of pellet drum often made of two human crania glued back-to-back; a type of drum consisting of two triangular forms joined at the apexes. When held in the hand of a deity, it can represent the rhythm of time and the creative energy. The two joined sections may also represent the male and female principles.

*darpaṇa*. A mirror; an attribute sometimes held by female deities. Also known as *ādarśa*. For symbolism, see cat. no. 18.

*darśana*. Literally, viewing, especially having sight of a revered person, sacred place, or sacred image and taking into oneself the inherent religious power of that person, place, or thing.

*dbus can* (Tibetan). Tibetan script "with heads." The formal Tibetan writing style in which most letters have a horizontal bar at the top.

*dbus med* (Tibetan; pronounced ümay). Tibetan "headless" script. The informal Tibetan writing style in which none of the letters have a horizontal bar at the top.

*deva*. A deity. A class of beings that reside in various heaven worlds. (Fem. *devī*)

*dhāraṇī*. A verbal incantation that is intended to generate great mystical power. A *dhāraṇī* is generally longer than a *mantra*.

*dharma*. Law; practice; justice; duty (moral or religious).

**Dharma.** The basis or essence of the Buddhist religion. The Buddhist way of life.

**dharmacakra.** "Law-wheel" (wheel of the law); the first sermon of Śākyamuni Buddha is said to have "set the wheel of the law into motion," that is, to have set the process of world righteousness into motion. Represented as a wheel in art. In depictions of Śākyamuni's first sermon, a wheel may be placed in front of or beneath the Buddha. The rotating wheel represents the Dharma (Buddhist way of life) in action.

**dharmacakra mudrā.** A teaching gesture; the gesture of "setting the wheel of the law into motion." The gesture requires both hands, held at about chest level and touching each other, though there are many variations in the way the hands can touch.

**dharmakāya.** "Law [truth] body"; the universal condition of order. The realm of the Ādi Buddha. See also *trikāya*.

**dharmapāla.** Guardian of the law; a protector of the Buddhist faith; a Buddhist tutelary deity often having a terrifying appearance and a fierce (*krodha*) character.

**dhotī.** A garment covering the lower portion of the body, worn around the waist and passed between the legs to be tucked in behind.

**dhyāna mudrā.** A meditation hand-pose. Usually, both hands are placed in the lap of a seated figure, palms upward, with the right hand usually atop the left. The gesture signifies deep meditation rather than communication to a devotee. The term may also refer to the similar lap position of one hand while the other (usually the right) makes another *mudrā*.

**dohā.** A song or chant written by a *siddha* as an expression of his or her inner vision of enlightenment.

**dvārapāla.** Door guardian.

**gadā.** A mace or club. One of Viṣṇu's principal attributes.

**ghaṇṭā.** A bell. The bell's transient sound is symbolic of the impermanence of existence. Its sound can warn away demons and attract the attention of worshippers or the gods. In Buddhism, it can represent *prajñā* (wisdom).

**gomukha.** Cow's-face; a convention in Pāla sculpture wherein the torso of a male deity is metaphorically rendered as a cow's face.

**grub thob** (Tibetan). Mahāsiddha.

**gtor ma** (Tibetan; pronounced tormā). Sanskrit *torma*. Bread or bread dough offerings.

**guru.** Literally, venerable. A religious teacher.

**iṣṭadevatā.** "Chosen deity." A deity chosen by the worshipper; sometimes serves as a tutelary deity.

**jaṭā.** Matted hair; characteristic especially of ascetics and of Śiva as the great yogin.

**jātaka.** "Birth story." A narrative of one of the many lives of Śākyamuni Buddha prior



to his final life. As a fully enlightened being, the Buddha was able to remember these lives and he revealed them to his disciples. The purpose of the revelations was to emphasize the virtue demonstrated by his actions in that life and, thereby, to have his lives serve as a model for others.

*jaṭāmukuta*. The "crown of matted hair" that is worn by some Bodhisattvas, but is especially characteristic of Śiva.

*Jina*. "Victor"; "victorious." A being who has attained the state of supreme knowledge. In Jainism, a Tīrthamkara. In Buddhism, one of the manifestations of the five *jñānas* (transcendent knowledges) that make up *bodhi* (enlightenment). The five Jina Buddhas are considered to be directional Buddhas. The five are almost invariably given as Akṣobhya (east), Ratnasambhava (south), Amitābha (west), Amoghasiddhi (north), and Vairocana (center). In some systems, Vairocana is associated with the east and Akṣobhya with the center.

*jñāna*. Knowledge; specifically, supreme knowledge or transcendental insight.

*kāla*. "Time." The destroyer of all; death. Often used as a name and epithet of Buddhist and Hindu deities. Also means "black," the "black one." (Fem. *kālī*.)

*kamaṇḍalu*. A water vase for ritual purification. Considered to be a vase-of-plenty from which all things arise. Used in Buddhist meditations as a vase of generation, from which the yogin envisions the deities arising out of a vase of water. See also *kuṇḍikā*.

*kambugrīva*. "Shell neck." A neck marked with three lines like those on the end of a spiral shell. Also called *trivali*.

*kapāla*. A skull or cup made of the upper part of a skull. The term may also refer to a severed head. Such a cup or head may be held as an attribute in the hand of a deity (usually of the *krodha* type).

*kapālamālā*. Garland of skulls.

*karaṇḍamukuta*. Literally, basket crown. A hair style shaped like an inverted conical basket.

*karma*. Act; action; deed. The Universal law of cause and effect by which good is rewarded and bad is punished through higher and lower rebirths as one moves through the cycle of *saṃsāra*.

*karṇikā*. Lotus flower pericarp.

*karṇikā pādapiṭha*. A footstool made of a *karṇikā*.

*kartrī*. See *kartṛkā*.

*kartṛkā*. A flaying knife held as an attribute by some deities. In Buddhism, it is used metaphorically to flay the skin of the meditator as a gesture of destroying the ego. Sometimes called *kartrī*.

*karuṇā*. Infinite compassion; a quality that constitutes half of Buddhahood, the other half of which is *prajñā* (wisdom). The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is the

embodiment of *karuṇā*.

*khadga*. A sword, sometimes held as an attribute by a deity. In Buddhism, the sword is used as a weapon to destroy ignorance.

*khaṭvāṅga*. A staff or club usually made of a shin or cubital bone and generally topped by a skull cup. Often held in the hands of a fierce (*krodha*) deity as an attribute.

*khro* (Tibetan). A metal, probably bell metal.

*kīrttimukha*. A "demon" mask placed above doorways and niches of temples or at the top of the halo or backslab of sculpted images.

*krodha*. Angry, wrathful, or fierce. Some deities are manifested in a *krodha* form in order to ward off enemies (of the faith) and protect the devout. The term is generally used in Buddhism, not Hinduism. See also *ugra*.

*krodhakāya*. An angry form of a deity. See also *krodha*.

*kula*. Lineage or family. The lineage and family of a Buddhist deity as related to one of the Jina Buddhas, each of whom heads a *kula*.

*kuṇḍikā*. A mendicant's bowl or vase. Sometimes used synonymously with *kamaṇḍalu*.

*lakṣaṇa*. A mark, symbol, or sign, especially the auspicious marks on the body of a Buddha, Bodhisattva, or *cakravartin*. Śākyamuni is said to have had thirty-two major *lakṣaṇas*.

*lalitāsana*. A sitting posture of relaxation in which one leg (generally the left) is folded on the seat while the right is pendent. Suggests the serenity of a deity or royal figure.

*lam rim* (Tibetan). The graded or gradual path [to enlightenment]; a system of teachings leading to enlightenment.

*lha khang* (Tibetan). "Deity house." A Buddhist temple.

*li* (Tibetan). A metal, probably bell metal.

*lo tsa ba* (Tibetan). A translator.

*mahāmudrā*. The "great *mudrā*" (great sign or seal). The Tibetan bKa' brgyud sect considers *mahāmudrā* to be the highest path to attain Buddhahood. It involves meditational union with deities of the *anuttarayoga* class.

Mahāsattva Bodhisattva. "Great Being Bodhisattva." In Buddhism, a supreme, fully enlightened Bodhisattva.

Mahāsiddha. "Great *siddha*." In Buddhism, a highly accomplished being who has attained supernatural powers.

*mahāvihāra*. A "great *vihāra*." One of the large, university-like monastic institutions of ancient India.

*maitrī*. Loving kindness; one of the qualities characteristic of highly perfected beings.

- makara*. A mythological quasi-crocodilian creature that is a symbol of auspiciousness and the primal life source.
- mālā*. A garland (often of flowers); a string of beads; a wreath. Commonly used as a synonym for *akṣamālā* to denote a string of recitation beads used as a counting device like a rosary.
- maṇḍala*. A cosmological diagram. A *maṇḍala* can serve as the basis for the ground plan of a building, as an aid to visualization during meditation, as a magical or symbolic offering, and in other capacities. Used in all Indic religions.
- maṇi*. A gem; in Buddhism, a wish-granting gem that bestows all benefits on living beings.
- mantra*. An incantation; a verbal chant; a mystic syllable; a phonetic symbol that both evokes and vivifies the divinity being propitiated. A *mantra* consists of a series of syllables that may or may not have translatable meaning; it is the sound of the *mantra*, not its "sense," that is important. A *mantra* may be personified. See also *dhāraṇī*.
- Mānuṣi Buddha. A mortal (human) Buddha, such as Śākyamuni. In various types of Buddhism, different numbers are cited, but frequently five, eight, or twenty-four such Buddhas are mentioned.
- Māravijaya. "Victory over Māra." Śākyamuni Buddha's defeat of Māra ("death," "destroyer," "killer") and, thus, his attainment of the liberative promise of Buddhahood. In artistic representations, the Buddha-to-be is shown seated beneath his *bodhi* tree, his right hand usually reaching toward the earth or touching it (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*) to call the earth to witness his right to attainment and, sometimes, the armies of Māra, his tempter's daughters, or others of Māra's retinue, are shown in the composition.
- māyā*. The illusory nature of the phenomenal world. The power of illusion or artifice.
- merumukūṭa*. In Buddhism, a hair arrangement worn by deities and yogins that symbolizes the cosmological center of the Buddhist universe, Mount Meru. Figures wearing such a headdress also usually wear a jeweled crown representing the five Jina Buddhas.
- mkhar* (Tibetan). A type of metal, probably a brass alloy.
- mokṣa*. "Release"; "liberation." The religious goal of Hindus, whereby the individual realizes a state of oneness with the Universal.
- mudrā*. A "seal" or "sign." Often, a gesture made with one or both hands. In Buddhism, the term is also a generic name for the female companion (*prajñā*) of a male deity.
- mukūṭa*. Crown, diadem, or tiara.
- mukūṭadhārin*. "Crown bearer." A crowned Buddha.
- nāga*. A serpent.
- nāgakesara*. A type of tree. A twig or flower of this tree may be carried as an attribute

of Bodhisattva Maitreya.

*nāgarāja*. A serpent king.

*navaratha*. Nine-*ratha*. See *ratha*.

*nilapadma*. The blue lotus. Same as *nilotpala* and *utpala*.

*nilotpala*. The blue lotus. Same as *nilapadma* and *utpala*.

*nirmāṇakāya*. In Buddhism, the "emanation or transformation body." The realm of the mortal Buddhas. See also *trikāya*.

*nirvāṇa*. Extinction or quiescence; the final goal in Buddhism. The goal towards which Buddhists strive. The attainment of perfect knowledge and integration with the Universal.

*pādapiṭha*. A footstool. In images, the footstool is often made of a lotus flower. See also *kaṇṇikā pādapiṭha*.

*padma*. "Lotus." One of the most universal and widespread symbols in Indic culture, the lotus serves as a pedestal upon which divine beings stand or sit and is an attribute characteristic of many deities. Its symbolism has many variations, but it is invariably associated with transcendence, life-assertion, grace, and peacefulness. Subtypes and color variations of the lotus carry specific meanings.

*padmapiṭha*. A seat or pedestal made of a lotus flower upon which a deity may stand or sit. Ordinary mortals are not normally depicted atop *padmapiṭhas*.

*padmāsana*. "Lotus-seat." A sitting posture in which both legs are crossed and each foot rests upon the thigh of the opposite leg. Used by yogins and religious practitioners primarily during meditation. Characteristic of divinities, especially of Buddhas and Tirthankaras or others who are being depicted in peaceful, meditative forms. Other names for identical (or slightly variant) forms include *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, *vajrāsana*, *dhyānāsana*.

*pañcaratha*. Five-*ratha*. See *ratha*.

*pañḍita*. A scholar; a learned man; a teacher; a pandit.

*pāramitā*. A Buddhist term meaning "perfection;" specifically, the virtues to be perfected by a Bodhisattva in the quest for Buddhahood. Generally, six or ten are cited, though sometimes twelve are named.

*paribhogaka*. Objects used by the Buddha and places the Buddha visited (and their implicit spiritual power).

*parinirvāṇa*. The final death of Śākyamuni Buddha.

*paṭa*. A painted banner or cloth.

*pīpal*. The *bodhi* tree of Śākyamuni Buddha. See also *aśvattha*.

*piṭha*. A seat or throne used by a holy person. Also refers to the pedestal of an image.

In Buddhism, the term denotes a sacred place, often a place of pilgrimage. For the Hindu equivalent of the latter meaning, see *tīrtha*.

*prabhā*. Light; radiance; rays of light.

*prabhāmaṇḍala*. "Circle of light or radiance." An aura or halo radiating from the head or body indicating transcendence or divinity. Sometimes called a *prabhāvalī*.

*prabhāvalī*. A halo; a radiant aura of light. Same as *prabhāmaṇḍala*.

*prajñā*. "Wisdom." The transcendental wisdom that constitutes one half of the state of Buddhahood. It is personified in Mahāyāna Buddhism as a female Buddha.

*pralambapadāsana*. A sitting posture in which the two legs hang downward. It is often called "European pose." Preferably known as *bhadrāsana*.

*pratyālīḍha*. A standing posture in which the deity is shown actively posed, sometimes trampling upon an enemy, usually with one leg bent, the other stretched. The pose signifies heroism. It is sometimes considered to be more exaggerated than *ālīḍha*. For discussion, see cat. no. 12.

*puṇḍarīka*. The white lotus. Held as an attribute by various deities.

*puṇya*. Moral or religious merit.

*pustaka*. A book or manuscript; sometimes held in the hand of a deity as an attribute.

*ra gan* (Tibetan). Brass.

*rāja*. King.

*rājālīlā*. An *āsana*; the pose of royal ease. Both legs are bent and are placed on the seat; one knee (usually the right) is raised while the other rests flat on the seat. The two feet are close together.

*ratha*. In sculpture, the pedestal of an image. In Pāla sculpture, the pedestal is generally offset. Earlier images commonly have a single, baylike central projection. The two side sections and the front plane of the central bay thus created constitute a *triratha* (three-ratha) format. Later images are generally more complexly offset, yielding *pañcaratha* (five-ratha), *saptaratha* (seven-ratha), and even *navaratha* (nine-ratha) configurations.

*ratna*. A gem. In Buddhism, the *ratna* symbolizes the treasure of the Buddhist teachings. See also *maṇi*.

*rdo rje* (Tibetan; pronounced dorjay). A *vajra*.

*ṛṣi*. A "seer." A rishi; an inspired poet; a sage.

*sāccha*. Moldmade Buddhist clay offering. See also cat. nos. 53 and 165.

*sādhana*. That which leads to the (religious) goal; a type of Tantric religious practice. Also, in Buddhism, a type of text that serves as a ritual and iconographic guide and sometimes as lineage instructions.



*sahajīya*. "Born together." Signifies the development of nonduality in the yogin.

*śāla*. A tree (Latin *Shorea robusta*); the tree grasped by Queen Māyā as she gave birth to Prince Siddhārtha, the future Śākyamuni Buddha.

*sambhogakāya*. "Bliss body." The realm of the Jina Buddhas. One of the three *kāyas* of the Mahāyāna Buddhist *trikāya* system. It is one branch of the *rūpakāya*, the other being the *nirmāṇakāya*. It is in this form that Buddhas appear to their Bodhisattavas. The Jina Buddhas are manifestations of this *kāya*. See also *trikāya*.

*saṃgha*. The Buddhist monastic community; the members of such a community.

*saṃsāra*. The cycle of births and rebirths to which all living beings are subject; transmigration. The concept is a presupposition of the Indic religions in general.

*saṃghāṭi*. A shawl worn over the upper body. One of the three garments (*tricīvara*) worn by Buddhist monks of the Pāli and some other schools of Buddhism. Often depicted as worn by Buddhas in art. See cat. no. 13 for discussion.

*śaṅkha*. A conch shell. Sometimes carried as an attribute of deities, especially Viṣṇu. It may serve as a musical instrument whose sound symbolizes the transience of the universe, as a war trumpet (for the god Viṣṇu), and as a water receptacle. See cat. nos. 51 and 52.

*saptaratha*. See *ratha*.

*śārīraka*. Bodily relics of the Buddha (and their implicit spiritual power).

*siddha*. A Buddhist adept at any of a number of Tantric practices.

*siddhi*. Spiritual or magical attainment.

*sku* (Tibetan; pronounced ku). Literally, body. In the artistic context, generally a cast image or sculpture.

*śmaśāna*. Charnal field.

*śramaṇa*. An ascetic; a monk.

*stūpa*. An architectural term denoting a dome-shaped or rounded structure that contains the relic of a Buddha, great teacher, or other honored individual, and thus generally considered to be a type of sepulchral monument. May be made in miniature or votive form, but even smaller versions often contain relics.

*śūnyatā*. Emptiness; nothingness; voidness. In Buddhism and Hinduism, the mental state that is to be achieved as the final result of religious practices; neither existence nor nonexistence; non-being; a state of complete neutrality that is considered to be the ultimate reality. It is seen as a dynamic, not a passive, state. The emptiness of unconditioned potentiality.

*sūtra*. "Thread." A short text or doctrine consisting of aphoristic thoughts or rules "threaded" together into a sequence. In Buddhism, all *sūtras* are considered to represent the authentic teachings of Śākamuni Buddha.

*śyāma*. Referring to something that is dark and beautiful. One of the forms of Tārā is Śyāma Tārā, who is usually shown as green in color.

*Tantra (tantra)*. A class of Indic religious texts and the practices and beliefs associated with them. Tantras are characteristic of some sects in all the Indic religions. They are associated with emphasis on the female, sexual symbolism, and secret, esoteric traditions and practices. Though the goals of Tantrins and practitioners of other forms of the Indic religions are essentially similar, the methods used to achieve the goals propounded by the Tantrins differ greatly from the other more widespread religious practices.

*tarjanī mudrā*. A threatening gesture in which the index finger is raised.

*thang ka* (Tibetan). A painting on cloth; a banner painting; a *paṭa*.

*thang khebs* (Tibetan; pronounced thankeb). A coverlet or veil that protects the surface of a Tibetan *thang ka*.

*tīrtha*. A Hindu holy site; a place of pilgrimage. For the Buddhist equivalent, see *pīṭha*.

*Tīrthamkara*. "Ford-finder." A Jain Jina ("conqueror"). One who has attained perfect knowledge. There are twenty-four such beings in the Jain system for the present time-cycle. See also cat. no. 23.

*tīrthika*. An adherent of a non-Buddhist religion. Buddhist monks often engaged in public disputations with *tīrthikas*, thus attracting (or losing) followers.

*torma*. Dough offerings. Same as *gtor ma* (Tibetan).

*tribhaṅga*. The "thrice-bent" posture. A standing posture in which the head, chest, and lower portion of the body are angled instead of aligned vertically; a plumb line from the top of the head passes through the left (or right) pupil, the center of the chest, then to the left (or right) of the navel and, finally, to a point between the heels.

*tricīvara*. The three garments that comprise the Buddhist monk's costume in the Pāli schools of Buddhism. See cat. no. 13 for discussion.

*trikāya*. "Three bodies." A Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine concerning the threefold nature of Buddhahood. The three "bodies" are the *nirmāṇakāya* ("Transformation" or "Form Body"), the realm of the mortal Buddhas; *sambhogakāya* (Bliss Body), the realm of the Jina Buddhas; and the *dharmakāya* (Law Body), the realm of the Ādi Buddha. The *nirmāṇakāya* and *sambhogakāya* together are known as *rūpakāya*.

*trimukṣa*. Triple knot of hair that symbolizes Mount Meru as the center of the universe in Buddhist cosmology and also the axis of the yogi's body in tantric physiology.

*Tripiṭaka*. "Three baskets." In Buddhism, the collections of sacred writings.

*triratha*. See *ratha*.

*triratna*. "Three jewels." The three "jewels" of Buddhism, that is, the Buddha, the Buddhist law (Dharma), and the monastic community (*saṃgha*).

*triśūla*. A trident that is a characteristic attribute of a number of deities, especially Śiva.

*trivali*. "Shell neck." A neck marked with three lines like those on the end of a spiral shell. Also called *kambugrīva*.

*tsha tsha* (Tibetan). A stamped clay *stūpa* or figure that is placed inside a *stūpa* or in a place of veneration as an offering. A *sāccha*.

*uddeśaka*. A representation or reminder. Essentially images or other allusions to the Buddha that are unrelated to his body or anything with which he came in contact physically.

*ugra*. A violent form of a deity. The term is used for Hindu gods and Śiva in particular. See also *krodha*

*upāsaka*. "Follower." In Buddhism, a lay worshipper. (Fem. *upāsikā*.)

*upavīta*. Invested with the sacred thread. The term is used synonymously with *yajñopavīta*. See also *yajñopavīta*.

*upāya*. Skillful means or practice. In Buddhism, the means by which knowledge or compassion may be made manifest; it is identified with the active, male principle.

*ūrṇā*. One of the auspicious marks of the body manifested as a whorl of hair or a circle or protuberance between the eyebrows. It is one of the *lakṣaṇas* (lucky signs) of a Buddha and is characteristic of other exalted beings, such as Mahāsattva Bodhisattvas.

*uṣṇīṣa*. A knot of hair, probably a turban knot, atop the head of a male figure; indicative of princely heritage.

*utpala*. The blue lotus. Same as *nilotpala* and *nilapadma*.

*uttarāsaṅga*. An upper garment or robe. One of the three garments (*tricīvara*) worn by Buddhist monks of the Pāli and some other schools of Buddhism. Often depicted as worn by Buddhas in art. See cat. no. 13 for discussion.

*vāhana*. "Vehicle." The mount or carrier of a god; a being who accompanies a god. The *vāhana* is usually a theriomorph and may symbolize an aspect or quality of the deity.

*vajra*. In Buddhism, a ritual implement that serves as a symbol of permanence, immutability, and the adamant nature of the universe. The *vajra* is a pronged instrument, sometimes flat, sometimes fully rounded, with prongs at both ends. The number of prongs varies from one to nine, but is almost always identical at both ends and is an odd rather than even number. In Tantric Buddhism, all Buddhist deities are considered to be *vajras* or *vajra*-beings and the *vajra* also serves as a symbol of the phallus. In some Buddhist contexts, deities of non-Buddhist pantheons who have been converted to the Buddhist Dharma are referred to as *vajras*.

*vajrahūmkāra mudrā*. A hand posture that signifies the syllable *hūm* in Vajrayāna Buddhism. The hands and wrists are crossed in front of the chest; the right hand holds a *vajra* while the left holds a *ghaṇṭā*—the two symbols in the crossed hands thus symbolize the union of male (*vajra*) and female (*ghaṇṭā*), and of skillful means (*upāya*; the male) and wisdom (*prajñā*; the female). The gesture symbolizes the union of wisdom and compassion in full enlightenment, or gnosis (*bodhi*).

- vajraparyāṅkāśana*. "Vajra-throne sitting." The lotus-position *āsana*. See also *padmāsana*.
- Vajrāsana. "Vajra-seat." The seat of enlightenment under the *bodhi* tree. The term also refers to a throne or seat that has a *vajra* upon it.
- Vajrayāna. "Vajra -vehicle." One of the major types of Buddhist practices; Tantra, or Tantric Buddhism.
- varaḍa mudrā*. The gift-bestowing gesture. It can be made with either the right or left hand; the hand extends downward, with the palm outward, as if offering something to a devotee, and, in fact, sometimes an object of offering is held in a hand performing this *mudrā*.
- vidyā*. Knowledge, especially practical knowledge; lore.
- vidyādhara*. "Bearer of Knowledge." Especially figures depicted as if flying above the heads of deities while bearing garlands (that symbolize the attainment of supreme wisdom).
- vighna*. An obstacle or impediment (to religious attainment). Sometimes, *vighnas* are personified and deities are shown trampling upon them as if to destroy them.
- viḥāra*. A monastery. See also *mahāvihāra*.
- vitarka mudrā*. Gesture of discourse. The hand is placed palm outward and the thumb and another finger (usually the index finger) form a circle. Same as *vyākhyāna mudrā*.
- vyākhyāna mudrā*. Same as *vitarka mudrā*.
- vyāḷaka*. A lion, usually a horned lion. Used as a motif on throne backs in Pāla and related art.
- yab yum* (Tibetan). "Father-mother." A posture in which a male and a female deity are united in sexual intercourse. Same as Sanskrit *yuganaddha*.
- yajñopavīta*. Invested with the sacred thread; the sacred thread itself. The thread is worn over the left shoulder so that it crosses the torso diagonally, hanging under the right arm. The term is used synonymously with *upavīta*.
- yi dam* (Tibetan). Same as *iṣṭadevatā*. A chosen deity.
- yoga* (yoga). Yoke; union (as if joined by a yoke). Practices by which the individual attempts to become "yoked" with the Universal. There are many types of yoga, and yogic practices are universal to all the Indic religions.
- yogi* (yogi); also *yogin* (yogin). A practitioner of yoga.
- yoginī* (yogini). A female practitioner of yoga.
- yuganaddha*. Sexually joined; joined as a pair. A representation of a male deity and a female deity in sexual intercourse. Called *yab-yum* in Tibetan. In some Pāla and Nepali images, the sexual joining is implicit when the female partner is seated on the left leg of the male.
- zangs* (Tibetan). Copper.

# GUIDE TO SUBJECTS AND THEMES

**T**his Guide leads the reader to the main subheadings of subjects treated in the text and provides an index to the works of art in the exhibition and catalogue. Each work is referenced in more than one way, when appropriate. For example, a catalogue entry that bears the title "Umā-Maheśvara" is listed in this Guide under "Umā-Maheśvara," and in addition is cross-referenced under the listings for "Śiva" and "Pārvatī." A catalogue entry entitled "Paintings from a Consecration Set" in the catalogue is here broken into the subjects of the individual paintings. Furthermore, when catalogue entries include extensive discussions of subsidiary themes, such as the *aṣṭamaṅgala*, references are also provided. The authors regret that it was not possible to provide a more thoroughgoing index based on words appearing in the text.

Agastya, cat. no. 35

Amitāyus, *see* Buddha, Amitāyus

Amoghpaśa Lokeśvara, *see* Bodhisattva, Amoghpaśa Lokeśvara

Amoghasiddhi, *see* Buddha, Amoghasiddhi

*andagu* plaque, cat. nos. 61-62

architectural models, cat. nos. 41, 50

Arhat, cat. no. 119

Assam, Pāla-related art of, p. 111

Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā, *see* Tārā, Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā  
aṣṭamahābodhisattva, cat. no. 116

aṣṭamahāprātihārya, p.103; Appendix I; *see also*

Buddha Śākyamuni, life scenes of, grouped sets  
aṣṭamaṅgala, cat. no. 121

Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā text, cat. nos. 57-59

Atīśa, cat. no. 114

Avalokiteśvara, *see* Bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara

bDe mchog bong [bu] zhal can lha gyi dkyil 'khor, *see*  
Kharamukha Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala

Bhairava, Śiva, cat. no. 28

Bhaiṣajyaguru, *see* Buddha, Bhaiṣajyaguru

Bhṛkuṭī, cat. no. 104

*bkra shis rtags brgyud*, *see* aṣṭamaṅgala

Bodhisattva, p.106; cat. nos. 54-55, 75, 81, 114, 116, 137, 159,  
164; Amoghpaśa Lokeśvara, cat. no. 103;  
aṣṭamahābodhisattva, cat. no. 116; Avalokiteśvara, cat.  
nos. 58 (third leaf, center), 80, 86, 88, 100-101, 110, 124,

142-143, 161; Ekadaśamukha Avalokiteśvara, cat. no.  
139; eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, cat. no. 139;  
Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra, cat. no. 127; Khasarpaṇa  
Lokeśvara, cat. no. 33; Maitreya, cat. nos. 5, 49, 50  
(depicted on one side of), 57 (center), 124, 134, 144, 158;  
Mañjuśrī, cat. nos. 58 (second leaf, center), 73, 119, 136,  
138, 162; Mañjuśrī Kumāra, cat. nos. 4, 25, 44, 102;  
Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara, cat. nos. 110, 148, 156; sash-  
bearing, cat. no. 164; Simhanāda Avalokiteśvara, cat.  
no. 154; Sita Mañjughoṣa, cat. nos. 74, 146-147; Vajrapāṇi,  
cat. nos. 81 (?), 149; Vajrasattva, cat. no. 50 (depicted on  
one side of)

book, printed, cat. no. 126

book cover, wooden, cat. nos. 90, 132

Buddha, Amitāyus, cat. nos. 60 (illustrated on one leaf),  
163, 165

Buddha, Amoghasiddhi, cat. no. 78

Buddha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, cat. no. 116

Buddha, crowned, p.105; cat. nos. 15, 30-31

Buddha, images, p.103

Buddha, Jina, p.105; cat. nos. 60 (illustrated on three leaves),  
78, 114, 116-117, 122, 163, 165

Buddha, Maitreya, cat. nos. 72 (possibly Maitreya), 119

Buddha, Mānuṣi, cat. nos. 114, 116, 122

Buddha, Śākyamuni or Vairocana, cat. no. 93 (side 2, lower  
right)

Buddha, Śākyamuni, life scenes of, p.103;  
aṣṭamahāprātihārya, p.103; [see also grouped sets  
below]; birth, cat. nos. 11, 41 (fig. 10), 59 (right); descent  
from Trāyastriṃśa, cat. nos. 9, 59 (left); first sermon,  
cat. no. 19; gift of monkey, cat. no. 57 (left); grouped  
sets, including aṣṭamahāprātihārya and subjects  
belonging to aṣṭamahāprātihārya but occurring  
individually or in groups of other numbers, cat. nos.  
14-15, 30-31, 41 (on temple), 57-59, 61-62, 107;  
Lalitavistara, scenes illustrating, cat. no. 107; miracle at  
Śrāvastī, cat. no. 59 (center); Māra, attack by, cat. no. 41  
(fig. 12); Māra, victory over (Māravijaya), as an emblem  
of the Pāla kings, p.104; cat. nos. 13, 15-16, 29, 31, 41, 50  
(depicted on one side of), 56, 61-62, 65-69, 107, 124, 133,  
135, 145, 157; parinirvāṇa, cat. no. 57 (right) [see also  
grouped sets above]; Rāhula receiving his inheritance  
from, cat. no. 41 (fig. 11); seven stations, cat. nos. 61-62;  
teaching sūtra, cat. no. 126



- Buddha, standing, cat. nos. 1, 14, 30, 42, 47, 63-64  
 Buddha, teaching, cat. nos. 19, 59 (center), 72; *see also*  
 Buddha, Śākyamuni, life scenes of, grouped sets  
 Buddha, Vairocana or Śākyamuni, cat. no. 93 (side 2, lower right)  
 Buddhist goddess, unidentified, cat. no. 70  
 Buddhist manuscripts, cat. nos. 57-60, 89, 91, 112  
 Burma, *see* Myanmar  
 Byams pa, *see* Maitreya  
 Cakrasaṃvara, cat. nos. 92, 93 (illustrated on side 1, left), 117, 121, 125  
*cakravartin saptaratna*, cat. no. 116  
 Cāmuṇḍā, cat. no. 24  
 Candamahāroṣaṇa, cat. no. 94  
 Candra dynasty, p.81  
 China, ceramics from, cat. nos. 164-165  
 China, paintings from, *see* Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan painting  
 China, sculpture from, cat. no. 88; *see also* Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan sculpture  
 China, textiles from, cat. nos. 115, 125  
 China, xylograph from, cat. no. 126  
 China, Yunnan, p.212; cat. no. 88  
 clay objects, p.98; cat. nos. 53-56, 66-68, 164-165  
 conch shell, cat. nos. 51-52  
 consecration pantheon of Sa skya sect, cat. no. 114  
 consecration set, cat. no. 119  
 crowned Buddhas, *see* Buddha, crowned  
 Ḍākinī, cat. no. 114; eight Ḍākinīs, cat. no. 118  
 Dali, image from, cat. no. 88  
 Descent from Trāyastriṃśa, *see* Śākyamuni Buddha, life scenes of  
 Dharmapāla, cat. nos. 114, 117  
 Dharmapāla deity, cat. no. 60 (illustrated on one leaf)  
 Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Lokapāla, cat. no. 119  
 Dikpāla, cat. nos. 117, 120  
*Dohākośagīti* ('Dhoha mdsod kyi glu), cat. no. 112  
 dPal ldan lha mo, cat. no. 117  
 Dveṣavajrī (Vajrayoginī), cat. no. 94  
 dZam bha la ser po, *see* Pīta Jambhala  
 eight auspicious signs, cat. no. 121  
 Ekadaśamukha Avalokiteśvara, *see* Bodhisattva, Ekadaśamukha Avalokiteśvara  
 eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, *see* Bodhisattva, eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara  
*feihua*, cat. no. 126  
 female deities, p.106; *see also* goddesses  
*Gaṇḍavyūha* manuscript, cat. no. 89  
 Gaṇeśa, cat. nos. 21, 76, 123  
 Garuḍa, cat. nos. 22, 97 (also appears on most images of Viṣṇu, *see also* Viṣṇu)  
 goddesses, p.110; *see also* female deities  
 gold image, cat. no. 82  
 Grub thob, *see* Mahāsiddha  
 gSang 'dus 'jam rdor, *see* Bodhisattva, Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra  
 Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra, *see* Bodhisattva, Guhyasamāja Mañjuvajra  
 Gur mgon lcam dral, *see* Pañjara Mahākāla  
 Hari-Hara, cat. no. 98  
 Heruka, cat. nos. 114, 120  
 Hevajra, cat. nos. 60 (illustrated on one leaf), 93 (side 1, center), 118, 153  
*Huishang peisa wen dashanquan jing*, cat. no. 126  
 hundred Buddhas, cat. no. 68  
 Indonesia, Pāla influence on, p.208; metal sculpture from, cat. nos. 70-87; *see also* Śrīvijaya.  
 iron, image made of, cat. no. 140  
 Jain art, p.110; cat. no. 23  
 Jambhala, cat. no. 71; Blue Jambhala, cat. no. 119; Kṛṣṇa Jambhala, cat. no. 116; Pīta Jambhala, cat. nos. 116, 131; Red Jambhala, cat. no. 119  
 'Jam dbyangs, *see* Bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī  
 'Jam dbyangs dkar po, *see* Bodhisattva, Sita Mañjughoṣa  
 Jina (Jain), cat. no. 23  
 Jina Buddha, *see* Buddha, Jina  
*Jñānottarabodhisattva paripṛcchā-sūtra*, cat. no. 126  
*kāmaru*, type of stone, p.359  
 Kāmarūpa, Pāla-related art of, p.111  
 Kanaka (Golden) Prajñāpāramitā, cat. no. 8; *see also* Prajñāpāramitā  
*kesi* (ko ssu), cat. no. 125  
 Khadiravaṇī Tārā, *see* Tārā, Khadiravaṇī Tārā  
 Kharamukha Cakrasaṃvara *maṇḍala*, cat. no. 121  
 Khasarpaṇa Lokeśvara, *see* Bodhisattva, Khasarpaṇa Lokeśvara  
 'Khor lo bde mchog, *see* Cakrasaṃvara  
*klegs shing*, cat. no. 132  
*ko ssu* (kesī), cat. no. 125  
 Kṛṣṇa Jambhala, cat. no. 116  
 Kubera, cat. no. 71  
 Kye'i rdo rje mkha' 'gro lnga, *see* Pañcakula Hevajraḍāka  
 Kye rdo rje, *see* Hevajra  
 Lakṣmī (appears on most images of Viṣṇu, *see* Viṣṇu)  
 Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa, cat. no. 52  
*Lalitavistara*, illustrations from, cat. no. 107  
 Lokapāla, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, cat. nos. 109, 119; Vaiśravaṇa, cat. nos. 93 (side 2, left), 109, 119; Virūḍhaka, cat. no. 109; Virūpākṣa, cat. nos. 109, 119  
 Luipa, Mahāsiddha, cat. no. 114  
 Mahābala, cat. no. 87  
 Mahākāla, cat. nos. 26-27, 117; "Mahākāla Nāgarāja," cat. no. 140; Pañjara Mahākāla, cat. no. 120  
 Mahāmāyūrī, cat. no. 91  
 Mahārakta Gaṇeśa, cat. no. 123  
 Mahāsiddha, cat. nos. 117, 120; Mahāsiddha Luipa, cat. no. 114; Mahāsiddha Śavaripa, cat. no. 112; Mahāsiddha Virūpa, cat. no. 160

Mahāśītavatī, cat. no. 91

Mahāśrī Tārā, see Tārā, Mahāśrī Tārā

Mahāsuvarṇa Vaiśravaṇa, cat. no. 116

Mahāvairocana, cat. nos. 82, 84, 141 (see also Vairocana)

Maitreya, see Bodhisattva, Maitreya; see also Buddha, Maitreya

*maṇḍala*, Buddhist, cat. nos. 38, 83, 117-118, 121; see also Appendix II. [NOTE: many Buddhist works, as seen especially in the Tibetan paintings in this catalogue, are intrinsically considered to be *maṇḍalas*; the entries enumerated here include only those in which the concept of the *maṇḍala* is discussed.]

Mañjuśrī, see Bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī

Mañjuśrī Kumāra, see Bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī Kumāra manuscript cover, wooden, cat. nos. 90, 132

manuscripts, palm leaf, cat. nos. 57-60, 89

manuscripts, paper, cat. nos. 91, 126

Mānuṣi Buddha, see Buddha, Mānuṣi

Māravijaya, see Buddha, Śākyamuni, life scenes of, Māra, victory over

Mārīcī, cat. no. 12

Māyadevī giving birth to Siddhārtha, see Buddha, Śākyamuni, life scenes of, birth

metal images, cat. nos. 42-50, 63-64, 69-88, 99-103, 133-163 musician, cat. no. 34

Myanmar, clay objects, cat. nos. 66-68; metal sculpture, cat. nos. 63-64; Pāla influence on, pp.199ff; stone sculpture, cat. nos. 61-62; wood sculpture, cat. no. 65

*nāgarāja*, cat. no. 140

Nepal, Buddhism in, p.256; historical setting, p.254; metal sculpture, cat. nos. 99-103; methodology and definition of style in, p.257; painting, cat. nos. 89-94; stone sculpture, cat. nos. 95-98; wood sculpture, cat. no. 104 painting, cat. nos. 57-60, 89-94, 105-114, 116-124

Pāla period, introduction to, p.75; geography of, p.75; rise of dynasty, p.77; reconstructing the history of, p.78; ruling dynasties of, p.81; the Pāla dynasty, p.81; the Candra dynasty, p.81; the Sena dynasty, p.82; religion and religious institutions, p.82; Buddhism, p.83; Hinduism, p.89; Jainism, p.90; art of, p.90; architecture, p.91; stone sculpture, p.92; metal sculpture, p.93; schools of sculpture, p.94; objects of wood, shell, clay, and other materials, p.98; painting, p.98; iconography, p.102; Buddhist images, p.103; Buddhist images, Buddhas, p.103; Buddhist images, Śākyamuni and his major life events (*aṣṭamahāprātihārya*), p.103; Buddhist images, crowned Buddhas and Jinas, p.105; Buddhist images, Bodhisattvas, p.106; Buddhist images, female deities, p.106; Hindu images, p.107; Hindu Images, Viṣṇu, p.107; Hindu images, Sūrya, p.108; Hindu images, Śiva and related deities, p.109; Hindu images, goddesses, p.110; Jain images, p.110; history of knowledge about Pāla period art, p.110; related art traditions in South Asia, p.111; Kāmarūpa (Assam), p.111; south India

(Tamilnadu), p.113; end of the period, p.115

Pāla period objects, clay objects, cat. nos. 53-56; conch shells, cat. nos. 51-52; metal sculpture, cat. nos. 42-50; palm-leaf manuscripts, cat. nos. 57-60; stone sculpture, cat. nos. 1-41

palm-leaf manuscripts, cat. nos. 57-60, 89

Pañcakula Hevajradāka, cat. no. 118

Pañcarakṣā text, cat. no. 91

Pañjara Mahākāla, cat. no. 120

Pārśva(nātha), cat. no. 23

Pārvaṭī, cat. nos. 2, 18, 32, 43, 90, 96, 99

Pīta Jambhala, cat. nos. 116, 131

porcelain, cat. nos. 164-165

Prajñāpāramitā, cat. nos. 8, 50 (depicted on one side of), 58 (top leaf, center), 84, 151 (?)

prospering deities, cat. no. 114

Ratnasambhava, cat. no. 60 (illustrated on one leaf)

rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara), cat. no. 115

rDo rje dbyings kyi dbang phyug ma (Vajradhātviśvarī), cat. nos. 105, 111, 116

rDo rje dbyings rnams snang (Vajradhātu Vairocana), cat. no. 106

rDo rje phag mo, see Vajravārāhī

rDo rje phyag na, see Bodhisattva, Vajrapāṇi

rDo rje sems dpa' (Vajrasattva), cat. nos. 105, 111, 116

rNam par snang mdzad (Vairocana), cat. no. 109

rNam par snang mdzad chen po (Mahāvairocana), cat. no. 141

"root guru," cat. no. 122

*ṛṣi*, cat. no. 35

*sāccha*, cat. nos. 53-56, 66-68, 165

Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara, see Bodhisattva, Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara

sage, cat. no. 35

Śākyamuni, see Buddha, Śākyamuni

*saptaratna*, cat. no. 116

Sarasvatī (appears on most images of Viṣṇu, see Viṣṇu)

Śavaripa, Mahāsiddha, cat. no. 112

Sena dynasty, p.82

Ser phyin ma, see Prajñāpāramitā

seven precious articles (or gems), cat. no. 116

sGrol ljang ma, see Tārā, Śyāma Tārā

sGrol ma, see Tārā

sGrol ma dpal chen, see Tārā, Mahāśrī Tārā

silver image, cat. nos. 81, 85, 144, 155-156

Simhanāda Avalokiteśvara, see Bodhisattva, Simhanāda Avalokiteśvara

Sino-Tibetan art, painting, cat. no. 124, sculpture, 156-157, 159-163; textiles, cat. nos. 115, 125

Sita Mañjughoṣa, see Bodhisattva, Sita Mañjughoṣa

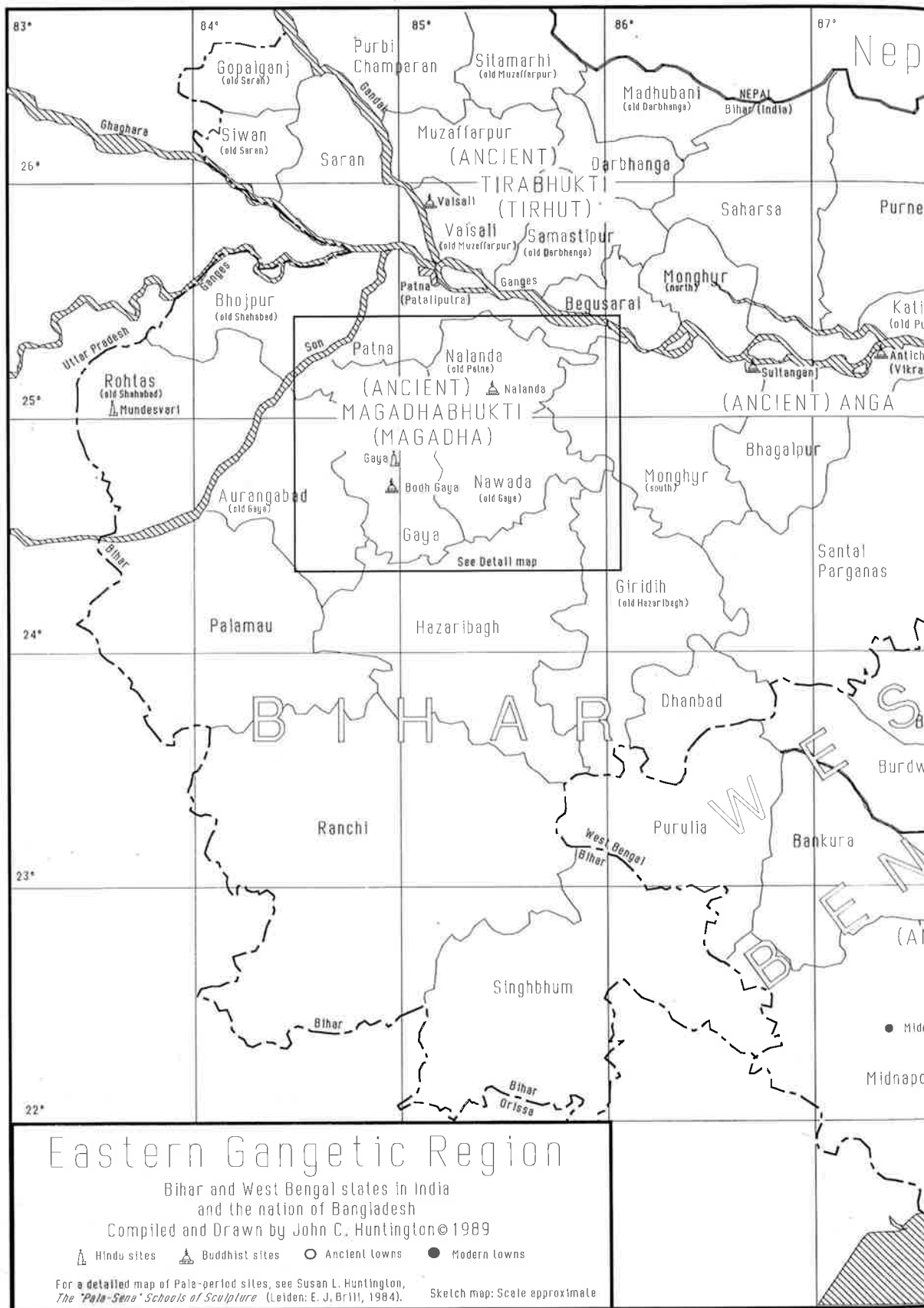
Sita Tārā, see Tārā, Sita Tārā

Śiva, p.109; cat. nos. 2, 18, 28, 39, 43, 77, 90, 96, 98 (Hari-Hara), 99

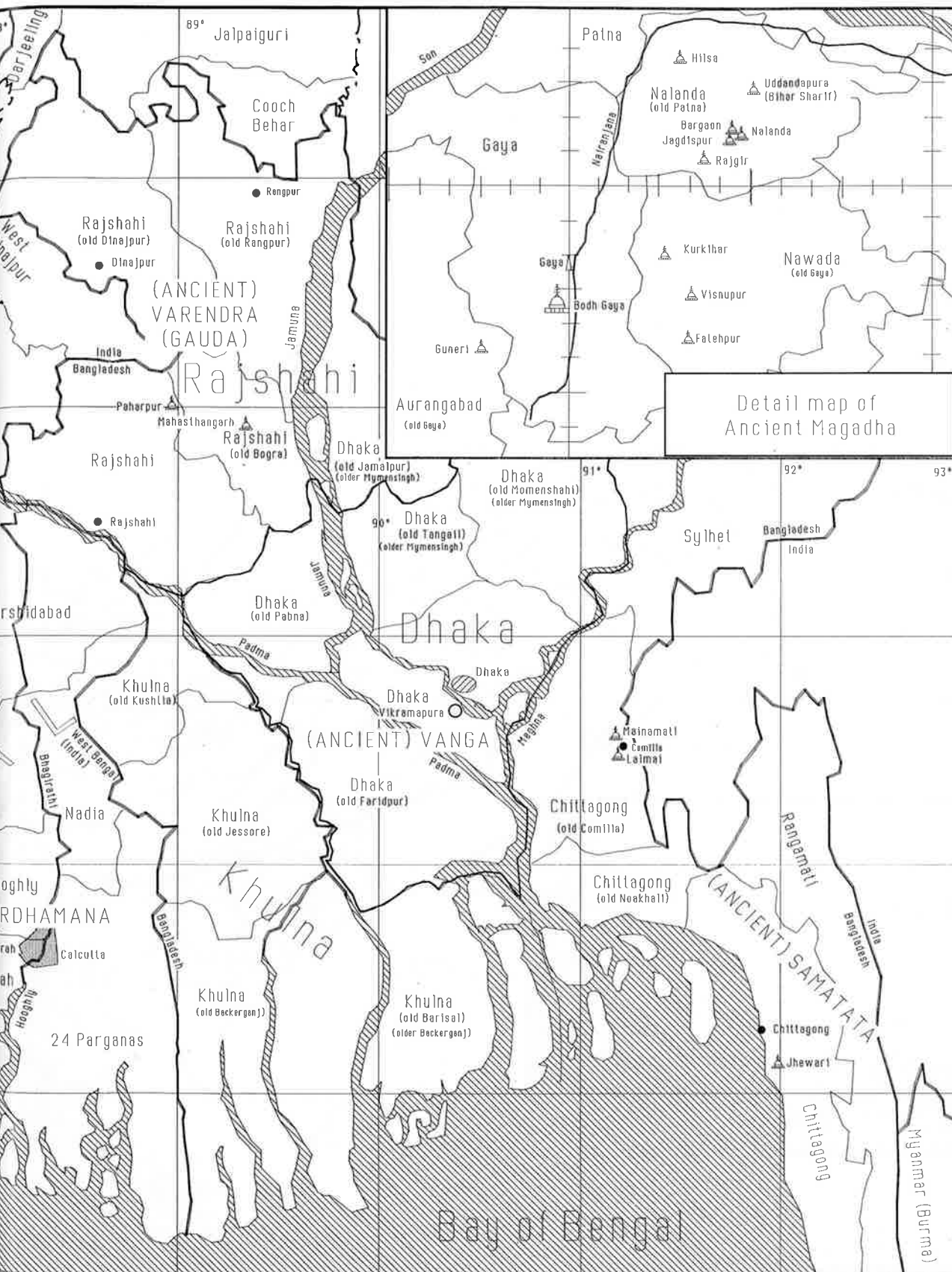
Śiva Bhairava, cat. no. 28

- sketchbook, cat. no. 93  
 slit-weave textile, cat. no. 125  
 south India, Pāla-related art of, p.113  
 sPyan ras gzigs, see Bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara  
 sPyan ras gzigs bcu gcigs pa'i shal can, see Bodhisattva, Ekadaśamukha Avalokiteśvara  
 sPyan ras gzigs dbang phyug seng ges gra, see Bodhisattva, Simhanāda Avalokiteśvara  
 sPyan ras gzigs yi ge drug pa jo lugs, see Bodhisattva, Ṣaḍakṣarī Avalokiteśvara  
 Sri Lanka, role of in Southeast Asia, p.198  
 Śrīvijaya, p.210  
 stone sculpture, Tibetan, p.359  
 stūpa, miniature, cat. no. 50  
 Sūrya, p.108; cat. nos. 3, 10, 20, 40  
 sūtra, illustration of a, cat. no. 126  
 Śyāma Tārā, see Tārā, Śyāma Tārā  
 Tārā, cat. nos. 14 (bottom right), 79?, 104, 114;  
     Aṣṭamahābhaya Tārā, cat. nos. 108, 113, 150-152, 155;  
     Khadiravaṇī Tārā, cat. nos. 6-7, 17, 95, 108, 113, 152, 155;  
     Mahāśrī Tārā, cat. nos. 129, 150, 151 (?); Sita Tārā, cat.  
     no. 128; Śyāma Tārā, cat. nos. 6-7, 17, 53, 58 (fourth leaf,  
     center), 108, 113, 152, 155; Vajra Tārā, cat. no. 38  
 teachers, cat. nos. 114, 122  
 temple, miniature, cat. no. 41  
 textiles, cat. nos. 115, 125  
 Thailand, Pāla-influence on, SEA pp. 23 ff; metal sculpture  
     from, cat. no. 69  
 thyāsaphu sketchbook, cat. no. 93  
 Tibetan art, introduction to, p.281; traditional history of,  
     p.283; period of First Propagation, p.283; period of  
     Second Propagation, p.284; Tārānatha's history of,  
     p.284; India, p.285; Nepal, p.287; later developments,  
     p.288; modern overview of, p.289; methodology and  
     definition of styles in, p.292; stylistic progression of,  
     p.292; regionalism in, p.293; introduction to styles of  
     early painting, p.293; pre-Shar mthun art, p.294; early  
     Shar mthun school, p.295; transitional Shar mthun  
     school, p.296; late Shar mthun school, p.297; early Tibetan  
     Bal schools, p.297; Tibetan Bal schools, p.297; late Shar  
     mthun and Sino-Tibetan school in China, p.298; sMan  
     and mKhyen Schools, p.299; Sino-Tibetan schools of  
     the Ming dynasty, p.300; Karma sGa bris school, p.300;  
     Sino-Tibetan style and the Chinese Pāla revival schools  
     of the Qing dynasty, p.301; Tibetan sectarianism and  
     artistic styles, p.301; the rNying ma school, p.301; gSar  
     ma (new) schools, p.303; gSar ma (new) schools, bKa'  
     gdams, p.303; gSar ma (new) schools, Sa skya, p.303;  
     gSar ma (new) schools, bKa' brgyud, p.303; problem of  
     sectarian designations for paintings, p.304  
 Tibetan metalworking, early Tibetan metalworking, p.366;  
     traditional view of p.366; metals p.366; Shar mthun  
     school of, p.368; transitional and late Shar mthun schools  
     of, p.368; later Pāla-dependent schools of, p.369; Chinese  
     and Sino-Tibetan Pāla-dependent schools, p.369  
 Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan sculpture, ceramics, cat. nos.  
     164-165; metal, cat. nos. 133-163; stone, cat. nos. 127-  
     130; wood, cat. nos. 131-132; see also Sino-Tibetan art  
 Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan painting, cat. nos. 105-114, 116-  
     124; see also Sino-Tibetan art  
 Tibetan stone sculpture, cat. nos. 127-130  
 Tirthaṃkara, cat. no. 23  
 Tse dpag me, see Buddha, Amitāyus  
 Tshogs bdag dmar chen, see Mahārakta Gaṇeśa  
 Umā-Maheśvara, cat. nos. 2, 18, 43, 90, 96, 99  
 Uṣṇīṣavijayā, cat. nos. 93 (side 2, second panel from right,  
     lower), 114  
 Vairocana, cat. nos. 60 (illustrated on one leaf), 109, 114; see  
     also Mahāvairocana; see also Vajradhātu Vairocana  
 Vaiśravaṇa, cat. no. 93 (side 2, left); Lokapāla Vaiśravaṇa,  
     cat. no. 119; Mahāsuvarṇa Vaiśravaṇa, cat. no. 116  
 vajra deity, cat. no. 83  
 Vajrabhairava, cat. no. 93 (side 1, right)  
 Vajradhara, cat. nos. 114-115  
 Vajradhātu Vairocana, cat. no. 106  
 Vajradhātviśvarī, cat. nos. 105, 111, 116  
 Vajrapāṇi, see Bodhisattva, Vajrapāṇi  
 Vajrāsana visualization, cat. no. 107  
 Vajrasattva, cat. nos. 85, 105, 111, 114, 116  
 Vajrasattva Bodhisattva, see Bodhisattva, Vajrasattva  
 Vajra Tārā, see Tārā, Vajra Tārā  
 Vajravārāhī, cat. nos. 92, 117, 125, 130  
 Vajrayoginī (Dveṣavajrī), cat. no. 94  
 Virūpa, Mahāsiddha, cat. no. 160  
 Virūpākṣa, Lokapāla, cat. no. 119  
 Viṣṇu, p.107; cat. nos. 36-37, 45-46, 48, 52, 90, 97, 98 (Hari-  
     Hara); incarnations of, cat. no. 52  
 wood, objects made of, cat. nos. 65, 90, 104, 131, 132  
 xylograph, cat. no. 126  
 Yama, cat. nos. 93 (side 2, second panel from right, upper),  
     117  
 Yamari, cat. nos. 93 (side 2, second panel from right,  
     upper), 117  
 Yunnan, Pāla influence on, p.212; metal sculpture from,  
     cat. no. 88  
 Zhenshen Guanshiyin, cat. no. 88

## MAPS AND CHART OF TIBETAN PAINTING STYLES

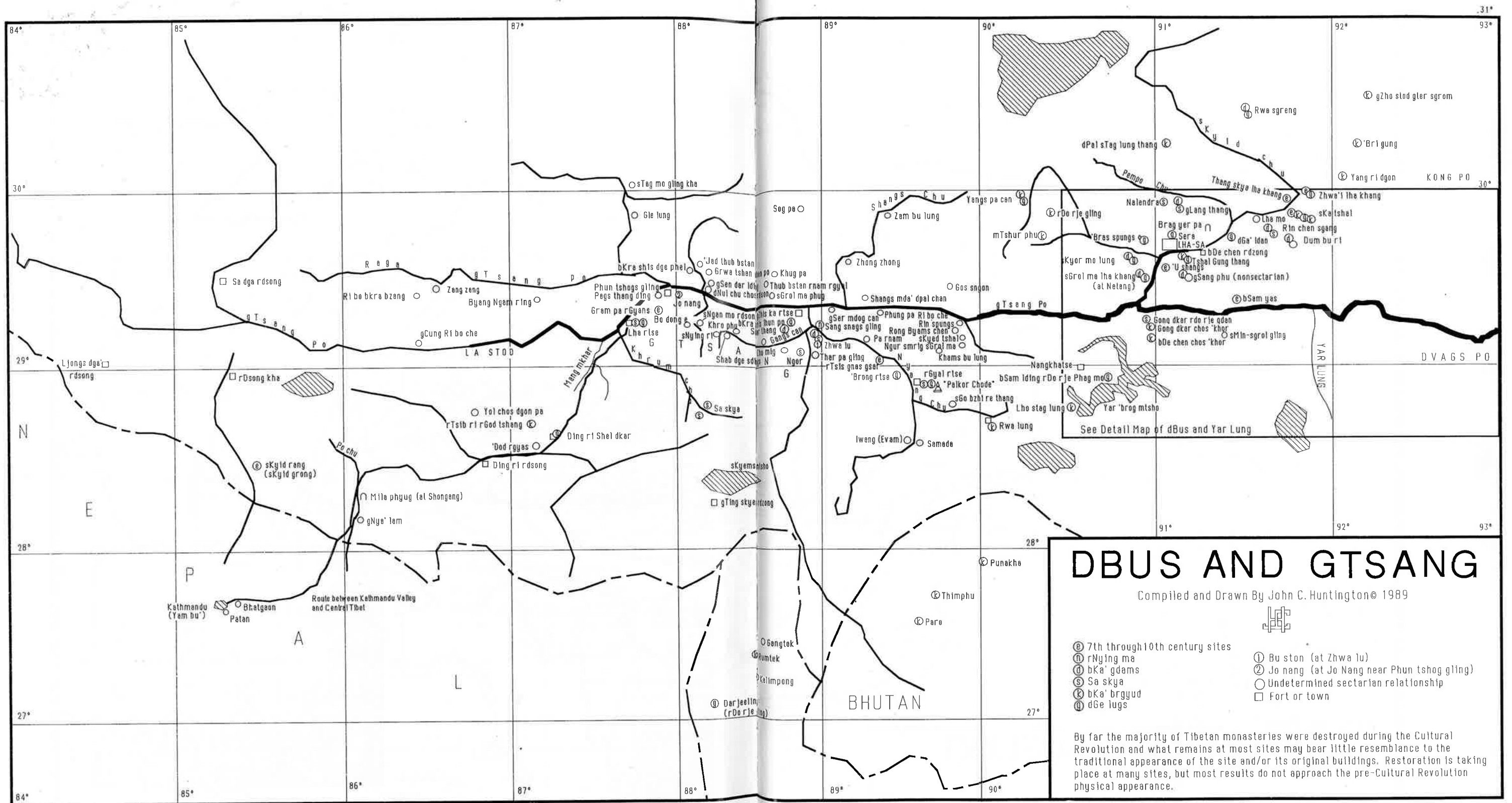




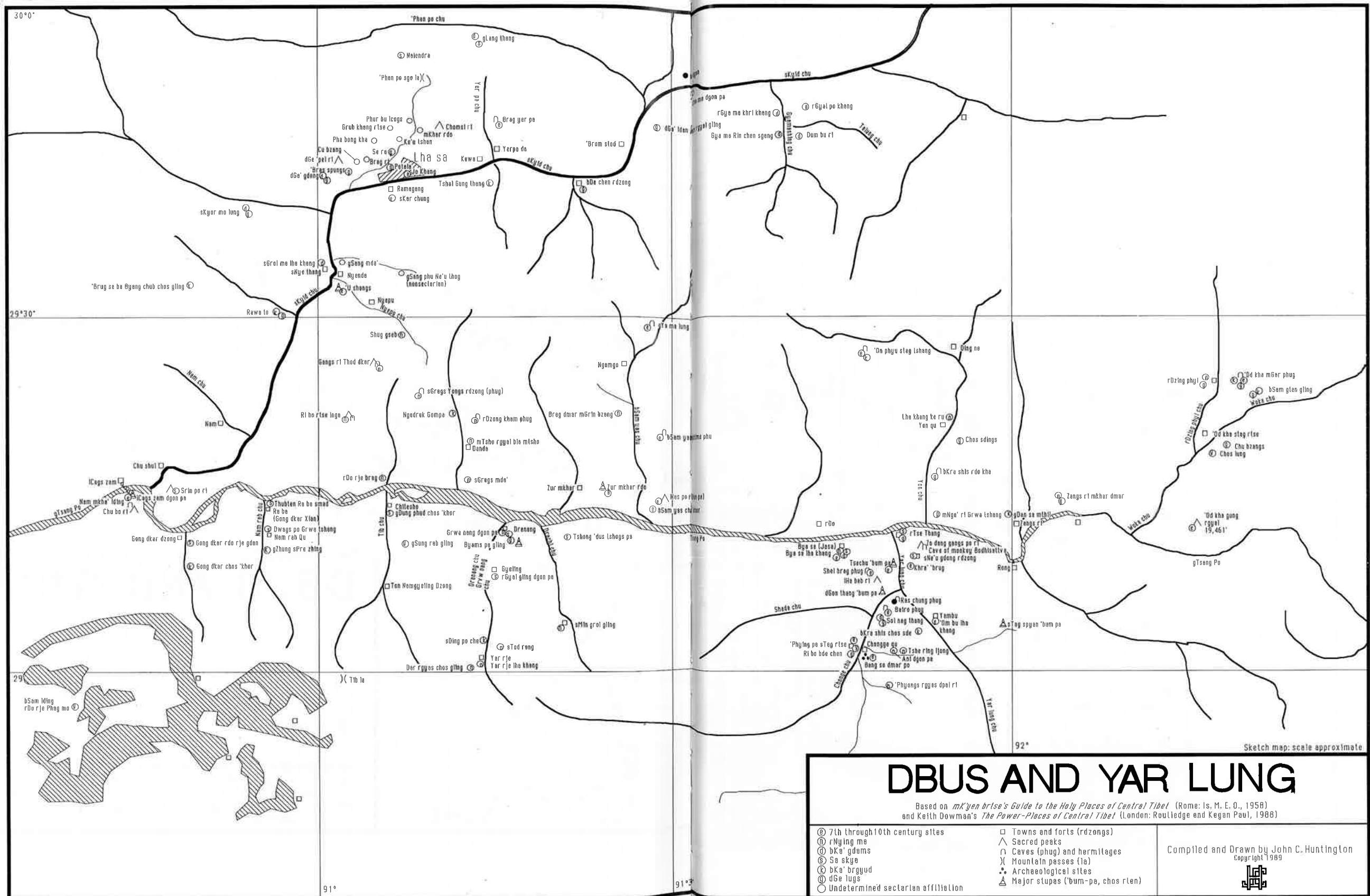








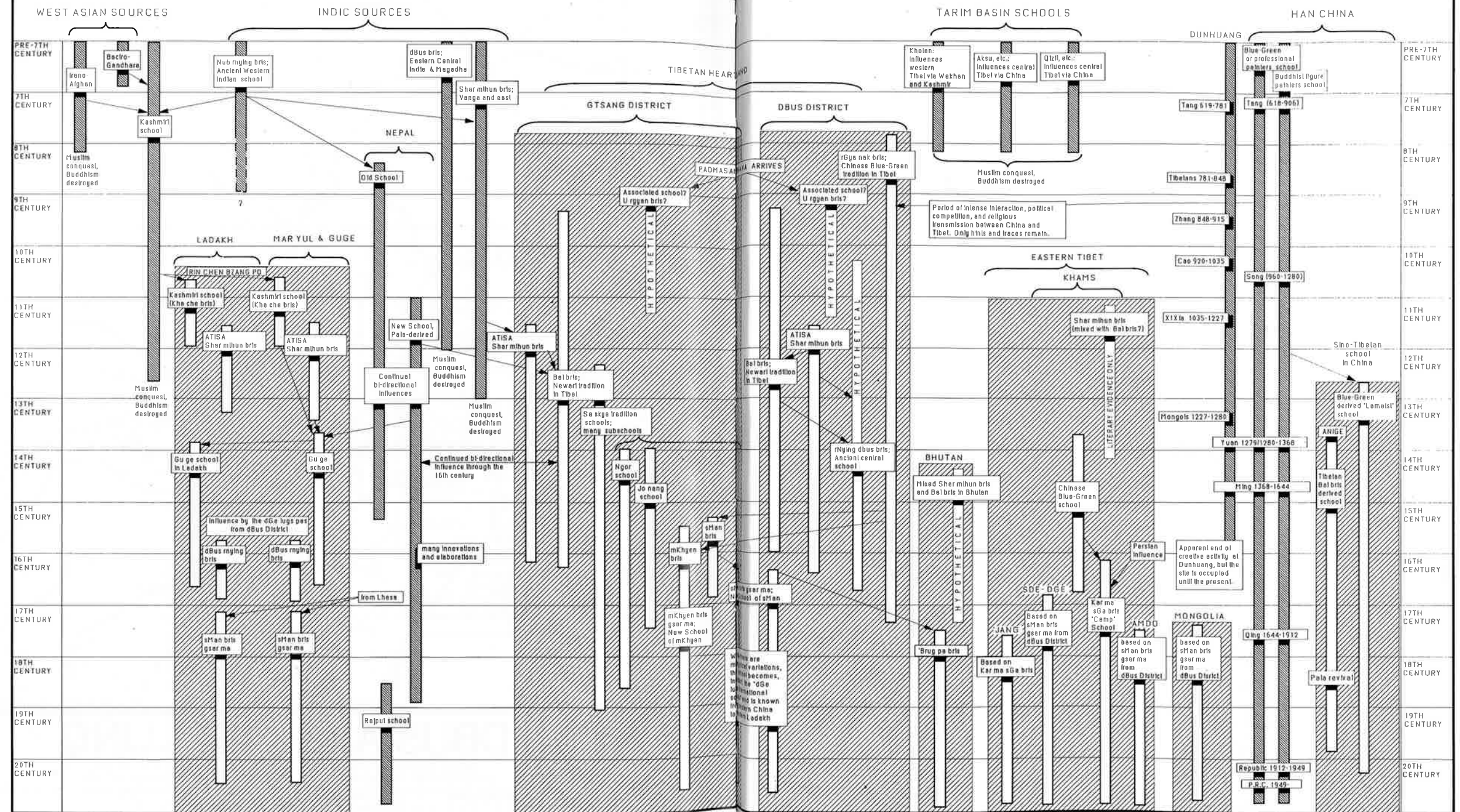






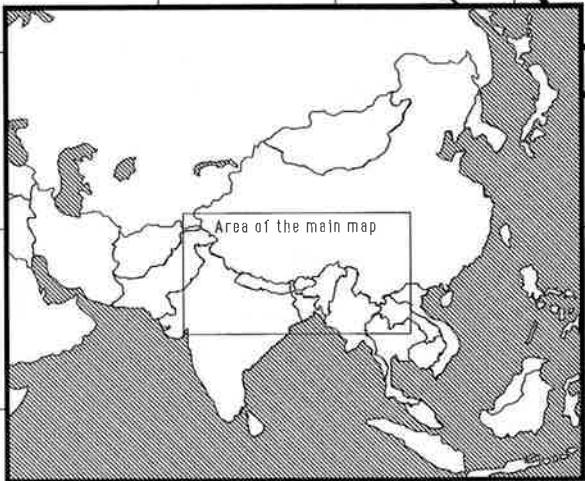
# THE STYLES OF TIBETAN PAINTING

COMPILED AND DRAWN BY JOHN C. HUNTINGTON © 1989

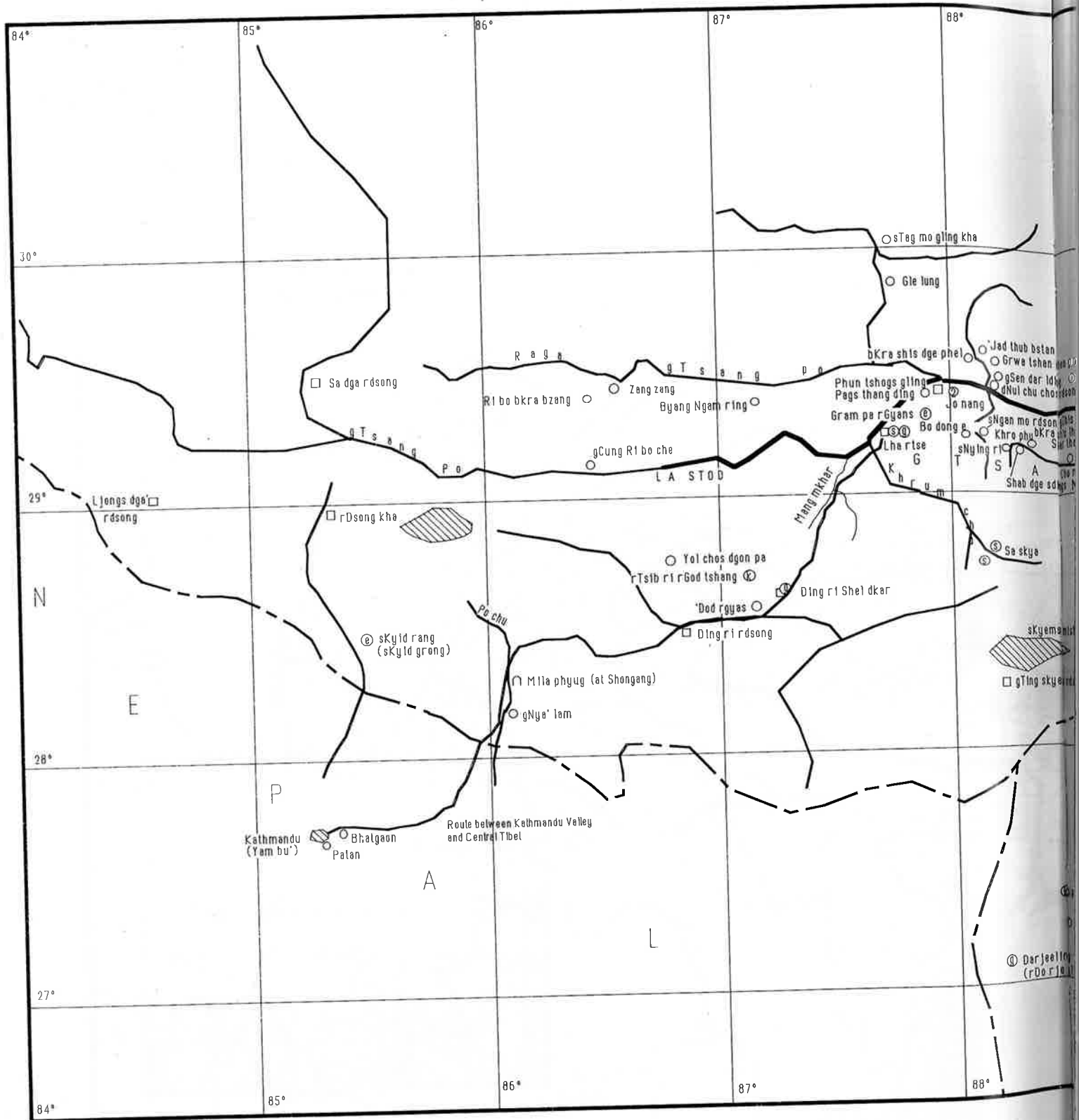


COMPILED AND DRAWN BY  
JOHN C. HUNTINGTON © 1989

 Sites of the Astamahapralharya  
Cycle of the Life of Sakyamuni Buddha

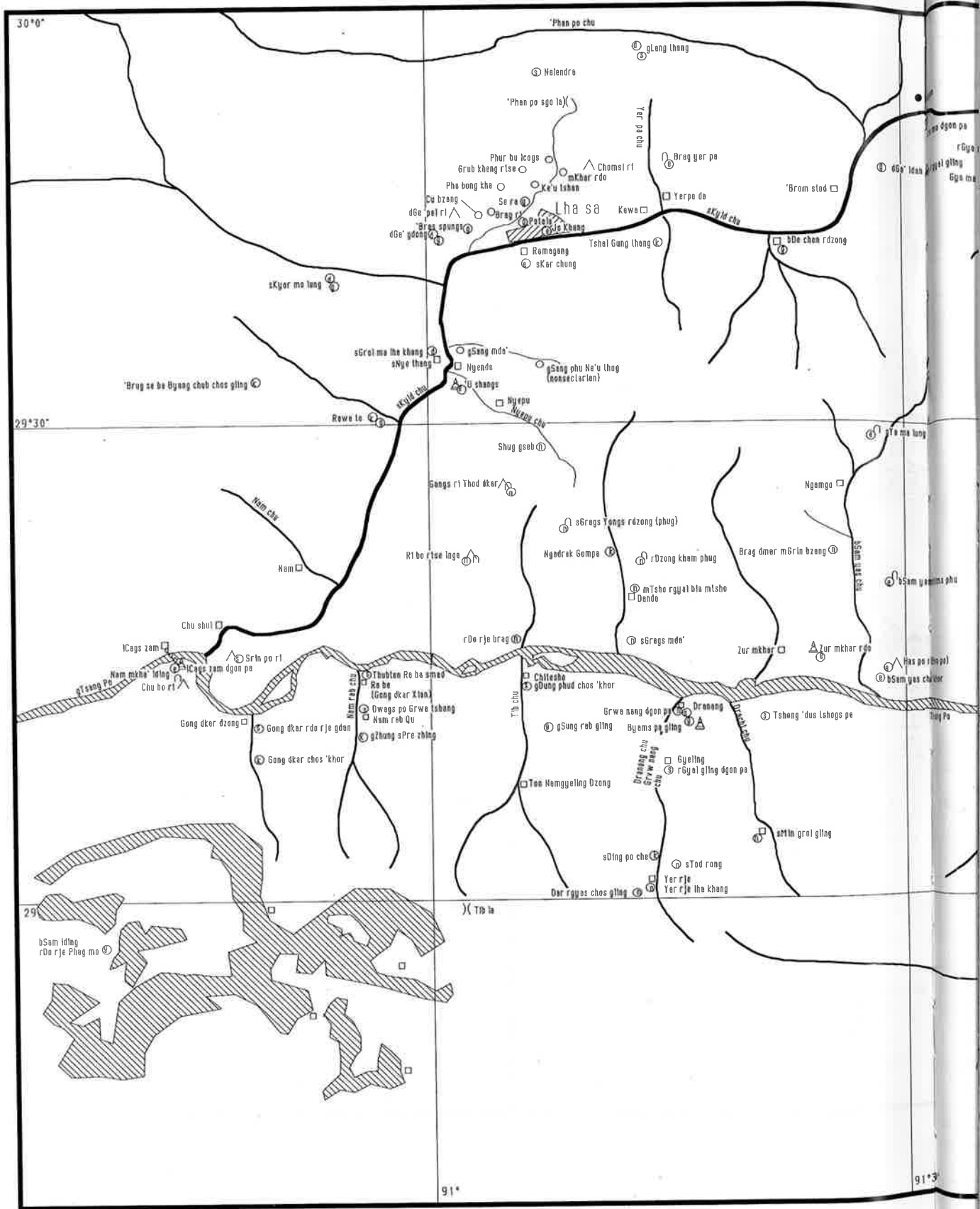














# DBUS AND YAR LUNG

Based on *mk'yen brise's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet* (Rome: Is. M. E. O., 1958) and Keith Dowman's *The Power-Places of Central Tibet* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988)

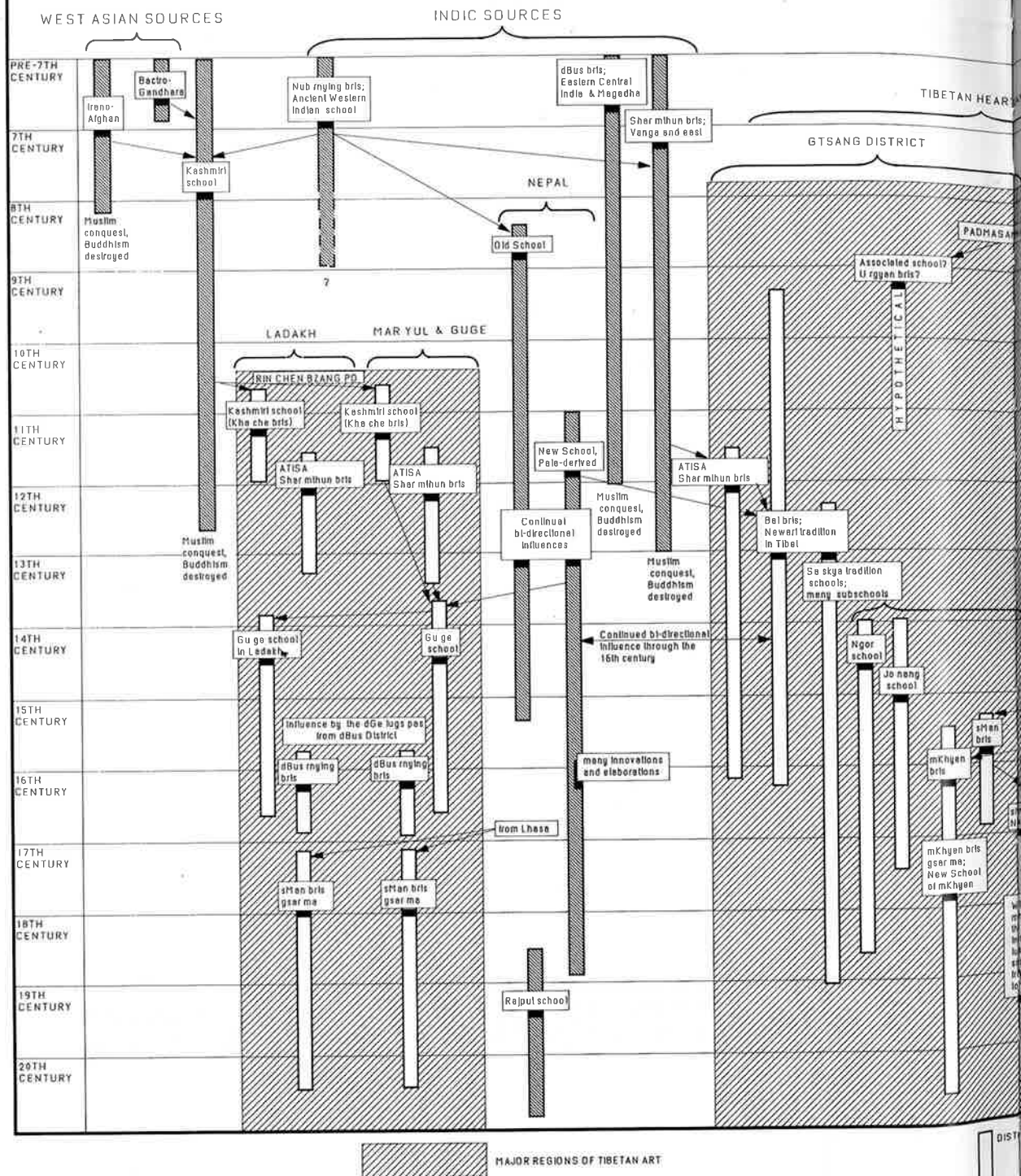
- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ⑧ 7th through 10th century sites     | □ Towns and forts (rdzongs)         |
| ⑨ rNying ma                          | △ Sacred peaks                      |
| ⑩ bk'a' gdams                        | △ Caves (phug) and hermitages       |
| ⑪ Sa skye                            | △ Mountain passes (la)              |
| ⑫ bk'a' brgyud                       | ⋈ Archaeological sites              |
| ⑬ dGe lugs                           | △ Major stupas ('bum-pa, chos rten) |
| ⑭ Undetermined sectarian affiliation |                                     |

Compiled and Drawn by John C. Huntington  
Copyright 1989



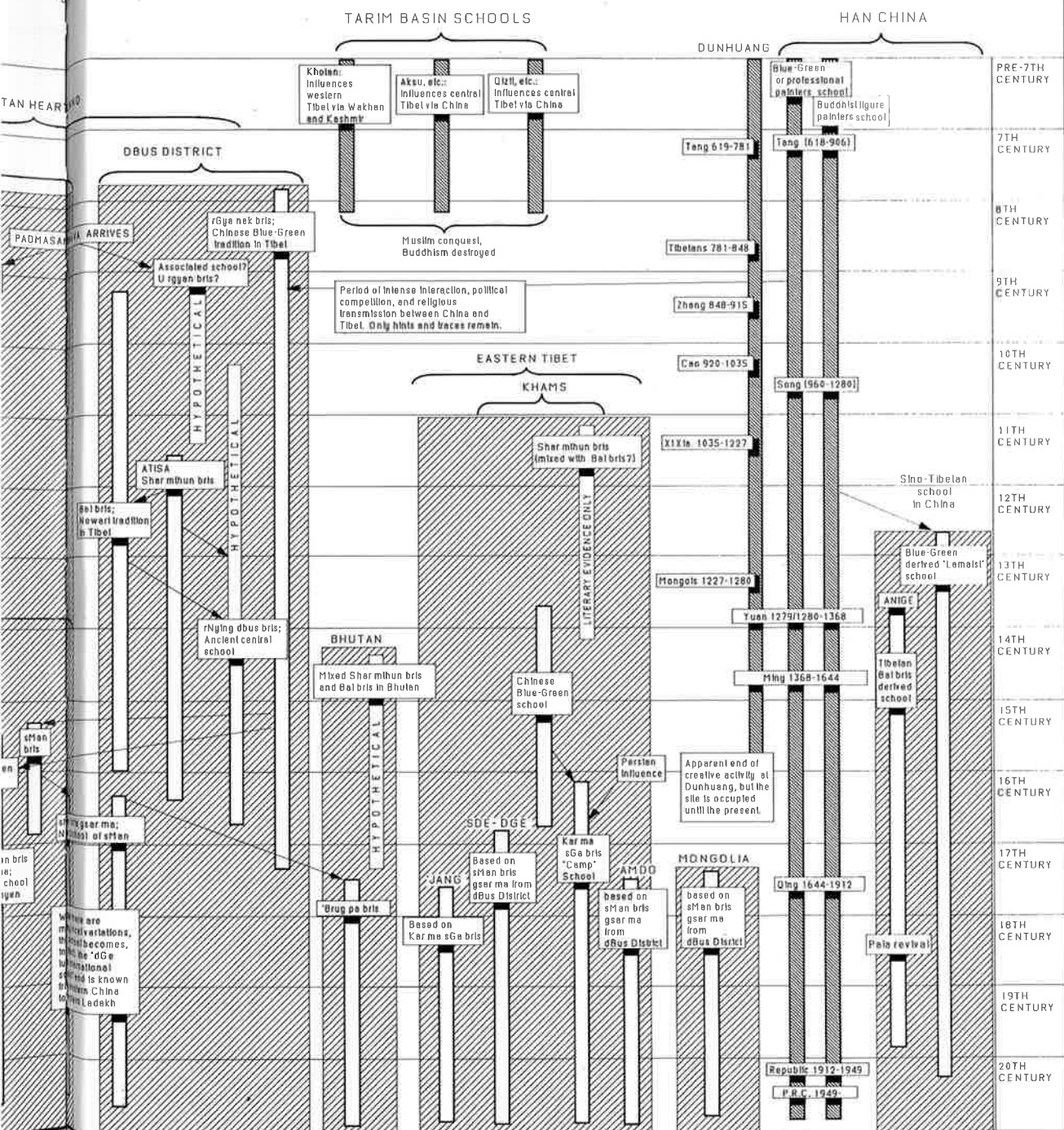
# THE STYLES OF

COMPILED AND DRAWN



# F TIBETAN PAINTING

DRAWN BY JOHN C. HUNTINGTON © 1989



DISTRICT SCHOOLS OF TIBETAN PAINTING

SCHOOLS EXERTING INFLUENCE ON TIBETAN ART